

593 0031

Rec'd 115461

PAYNE

OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS FOR THE HELENA NATIONAL FOREST

DAVID M. PAYNE
Recreation Forester

Helena National Forest
2001 Poplar Street
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 449-5490

Clemson Class of 1990

Final Report - May 9, 1991

This paper was prepared as a student project in partial fulfillment of the requirements of the Professional Development for Outdoor Recreation Management Program at Clemson University. It in no way reflects USDA Forest Service policy nor are the opinions expressed those of anyone other than the author.

ABSTRACT

AUTHOR: David M. Payne
Recreation Forester
Helena National Forest
Helena Ranger District
2001 Poplar
Helena, Montana 59601
(406) 449-5490

TITLE: Off-Highway Vehicle Management Recommendations for the Helena National Forest

ABSTRACT: Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use has been and continues to be an important and popular recreation activity on the Helena National Forest. Following implementation of the Travel Plan Revision in 1984 and the Forest Plan in 1986, interest in OHV management and use on the Forest has increased. In response to that interest, the Helena National Forest will further identify and expand existing motorized recreation opportunities so they may be fully utilized.

This project provides recommendations for the development of an OHV Program on the Helena National Forest. Current OHV use and management is examined. Compliance with existing regulations, policy, and land management plans will be reviewed. The objectives of this paper are:

1. Identify current OHV regulations, policy, and direction affecting management of Helena National Forest lands.
2. Review and analyze existing OHV use and management on the Helena National Forest.
3. Provide recommendations for future OHV use and management on the Helena National Forest.
4. Identify a systematic process for OHV trail designation and or development.

Keywords: ATV (Motorized Rec), Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV), Off-Road Vehicle (ORV), Trail

TABLE OF CONTENTS

ABSTRACT.....	i
EXECUTIVE SUMMARY.....	1
I. INTRODUCTION.....	3
Vicinity Map.....	5
Statement Of Purpose.....	6
II. LITERATURE REVIEW.....	7
III. METHODOLOGY.....	8
IV. ANALYSIS.....	13
Helena Forest OHV Management.....	13
OHV Users Of The Helena Forest.....	21
OHV Management Concerns On The Helena Forest.....	23
V. DISCUSSION.....	27
Recommendations.....	27
Process For OHV Trail Development.....	33
LITERATURE CITED.....	35
APPENDIX.....	37

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Title: OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE MANAGEMENT RECOMMENDATIONS
FOR THE HELENA NATIONAL FOREST

Author: David M. Payne
Recreation Forester
Helena National Forest
2001 Poplar Street
Helena, MT 59601
(406) 449-5490

Off-highway vehicle (OHV) use on the Helena National Forest is a popular recreation activity. The most frequently noted types of OHVs operating on Forest lands include: 4-wheel drive vehicles, snowmobiles, All-Terrain Vehicles (ATVs), trail bikes, and dune buggies. The majority of off-highway vehicle use on the Helena Forest occurs from local residents within a six county area-of-influence. The 1988 census estimates for this area indicates a population of approximately 145,800. Although there are no accurate OHV use figures for the Helena Forest, total RVDs for snowmobile, ATV, and trail bike use is estimated to be approximately 28,000 per year. This does not include an undetermined but large number of 4-wheel drive vehicles also operating on Forest lands.

Both the individual motorized users and organized clubs have requested that additional OHV opportunities be developed for their activities. OHV clubs have expressed interest in assisting Forest personnel with the planning, development and management of off-highway vehicle trails. Their input plus additional travel management concerns indicated a need to evaluate the existing off-highway vehicle situation on the Helena Forest.

An analysis of off-highway vehicle management and use on the Helena Forest was conducted through research of past management activities. In addition, existing OHV use and management were discussed with Forest personnel and other land management agency representatives. Local recreationists, including several OHV organizations, also provided significant input regarding the off-highway vehicle situation on Helena Forest lands.

Current management direction for the use of OHVs on Helena Forest lands is provided by a Travel Plan, originally implemented in 1976, and the Forest Plan, adopted in 1986. Based upon public involvement at the time, neither of these planning documents fully recognized either the future demand for OHV use on Helena Forest lands or its associated impact.

Prior and subsequent to development of Forest planning documents, numerous regulations and guidelines have been established for the management of off-highway vehicles on National Forest lands. Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 were created, in part, to protect forest resources which may be impacted by off-road vehicle use. In addition, regulations contained within 36 CFR and National Forest Service policy direction provide further management guidelines which should be implemented.

Existing travel plan restrictions indicate approximately 35% of Helena Forest lands are closed yearlong to 4-wheel drive vehicles, ATVs, and trail bikes. An additional 11% of Forest lands are restricted seasonally to those same off-highway vehicles. Approximately 526,500 acres of remaining Forest lands are open to motorized use and may provide further opportunities for 4-wheel drive vehicles, ATVs, and trail bikes. Snowmobile use is restricted yearlong on approximately 40% of all Helena Forest lands.

Although snowmobile use is also restricted seasonally on another 17% of Forest land, additional opportunities may be available on the remaining 419,250 acres.

Currently, 64% of the total miles of maintained Forest trails are closed yearlong to ATVs and trail bikes. However, there are 142 miles of Helena Forest trails with no motorized restrictions which are open to ATV and trail bike use. Approximately 65 miles of additional Helena Forest trails are also open for some type of OHV use on a seasonal basis. Opportunities are available to construct and maintain additional off-highway vehicle trails on the Forest.

Forest Development Roads provide off-highway vehicle opportunities only for licensed "street legal" vehicles. Motorized use is restricted yearlong on approximately 180 miles or 10% of Helena Forest roads. An additional 14%, approximately 250 miles, of Forest roads are restricted to motorized access on a seasonal basis. Segments of the remaining 1,370 miles of Forest roads may provide opportunities to develop and manage "four-wheel drive ways" for OHV use.

Unrestricted roads, trails and lands on the Helena Forest are available for OHV use. However, off-highway vehicle use in all of these areas may not be suitable or desirable. Inventories of existing and potential OHV opportunities on Forest lands should be initiated. The Forest Recreation Opportunity Spectrum should be mapped and utilized for future off-highway vehicle planning and management.

Numerous travel management concerns were identified through analysis of the OHV situation on the Helena National Forest. Enforcement of the existing Travel Plan is difficult and additional motorized restrictions are necessary. Recent Forest Service policy direction regarding OHV management has not been fully implemented. Based upon these and other concerns regarding motorized use on the Forest, the Travel Plan should be revised. Off-highway vehicle planning and management should be evaluated in conjunction with the entire travel planning process on the Forest.

There is no existing Off-Highway Vehicle Plan for the Helena National Forest. OHV trails and other motorized opportunities have evolved or been developed on a site specific basis on each ranger district. An effective off-highway vehicle program should be developed and managed on a Forest-wide basis. This will require coordination and cooperation between the three ranger districts and adjacent land management agencies. An effective OHV program will also require the involvement and input of local OHV organizations. Partnerships should be developed with interested OHV clubs to develop and maintain motorized opportunities responsive to their needs.

Additional off-highway vehicle trails should be developed on the Helena National Forest. OHV opportunities must be evaluated for compliance with existing regulations and Forest Service policy in addition to the Forest Plan and current Travel Plan. The NEPA process should be implemented during Travel Plan development and implementation to provide sufficient public involvement. This will also insure there are no adverse effects resulting from the proposed OHV use.

The Helena National Forest should continue to be managed responsive to the recreational interests of local residents when possible. Increased OHV use on the Forest and recent Forest Service policy direction indicate the existing Travel Plan requires significant changes. Additional off-highway vehicle opportunities can be developed through increased public involvement in the planning process and development of an OHV program on the Helena Forest.

I. INTRODUCTION

Like many areas in the country today, Off-Highway Vehicle (OHV) use is a popular recreation activity in western Montana. The term off-highway vehicle has evolved from and is generally synonymous with the previous designation of Off-Road Vehicle (ORV). Off-Highway Vehicle is a general phrase describing all motorized vehicles capable of travel off developed roads. Major OHV types used in Montana include: snowmobiles, trail bikes, all-terrain vehicles (ATVs), 4-wheel drive vehicles, and dune buggies.

"Montana is essentially an "outdoor state" with few metropolitan areas and a great deal of open space and beautiful scenery" (State Outdoor Recreation Plan 1967). Due to the large open expanses of land and the vast supply of natural resources, past economic growth in the state was based upon the mining, timber and agricultural industries. Extensive on and off road vehicle use was necessary for the continued development of these industries. As a result, a large network of roads and trails were established through exploration and use. Motorized land access was necessary for a variety of occupations, but also became desirable in pursuit of leisure activities.

Ten National Forests encompass approximately 16.8 million acres within the state boundaries. The Helena National Forest, established by President Theodore Roosevelt in 1906, is comprised of approximately 975,000 acres. It is located in westcentral Montana and straddles the Continental Divide of the Rocky Mountains. The Helena National Forest is bordered by the Lewis & Clark and the Lolo National Forests to the north and the Deerlodge National Forest to the south.

The primary area-of-influence for the Helena National Forest, as identified in the Forest Plan (1986), includes the following counties: Broadwater, Cascade, Jefferson, Lewis & Clark, Meagher and Powell. The 1988 census estimates for this area-of-influence indicates a population base of approximately 145,800. Although located nearer the Lewis & Clark National Forest, Great Falls, with a population of 58,280 is the largest city within the Helena National Forest area-of-influence. Cascade County, which includes Great Falls, represents 56% of the population within this area-of-influence.

District offices for the Helena National Forest are located in Helena, Lincoln and Townsend, Montana. The geographic center of the Forest's area-of-influence is Helena, the state Capitol. Its population of 24,670 is approximately 52% of the total Lewis and Clark county population. Lincoln, with a summer population of approximately 1,000, is the social and economic hub for the northern one-third of the Forest's area-of-influence. Townsend, located within the Forest's southeast area-of-influence, has a population of 2,000.

Use of motorized vehicles for many types of recreation on the Helena National Forest has been and continues to be popular. Motorized access into the National Forest is desirable for the pursuit of many recreational activities. Existing recreational opportunities on the Forest are varied and include the following: camping, picnicking, hunting, fishing, hiking, and cross-country skiing. Much of the access for these activities is provided through established state, county, or forest roads. In many cases however, motorized access is only gained off the developed road systems. Although this off-highway vehicle use occurs throughout the year, it is especially predominant during the fall big-game hunting season.

The experience of off-highway vehicle riding on the Helena National Forest is also a recreational activity enjoyed by many. "Off-highway vehicle recreation including the use of off-road vehicles is possibly one of the most extensive recreational activities taking place on our public lands today and all indications are that it will continue to grow at an increasingly rapid rate" (Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan 1978). Throughout western Montana, 4-wheel drive vehicles such as pickup trucks and similar type vehicles, are evident in large numbers. The 1990 Motorcycle Statistical Annual, published by the Motorcycle Industry Council, identifies Montana as a state with one of the highest percentages of off-road motorcycles per capita.

In addition, the development and popularity of the All-Terrain Vehicle have significantly added to the numbers of OHV users on the Helena National Forest.

Although the population increase within the Helena Forest's area-of-influence during the past ten years has been relatively small (+2,500), there appears to be a significant increase in public use of Forest lands. Some forest users wish to enjoy their recreational activities to the exclusion of other types of users. Various recreational user groups have organized to promote, protect and enhance their specific activities. Because some of the recreational opportunities available on the Helena Forest are not compatible in the same location, conflicts have arisen. Often the conflict is either between the motorized and nonmotorized users or between various motorized user groups themselves.

The Helena Forest Plan was adopted in 1986. Forest management direction, which had been developed through public participation, was identified in that document. Many of our publics feel we should adhere closely to the specific decisions the Forest has adopted within the Plan. Other publics believe the Forest Plan does not properly reflect the existing condition of the land and should be amended. During development of the Forest Plan there was little interest expressed regarding off-highway vehicle use. As a result, many of the existing concerns of the off-highway vehicle users were never identified.

"The popularity of wheeled vehicles for recreational use has become one of the more critical elements for recreation administration to contend with, particularly on the federal public lands" (Montana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan 1973). Land managers throughout the National Forest System, including the Helena, face OHV challenges such as: acceptable limits of resource impacts, type and number of recreational opportunities provided, user conflicts and law enforcement. "The extent of off-road vehicle damage and conflict with other users of the land varies greatly from place to place across the nation, but over-all the Council on Environmental Quality sees the off-road vehicle problem as one of the most serious public land use problems that we face" (Sheridan 1979). Many of the existing land management problems on the Helena Forest are related to Travel Planning and OHV use.

Vicinity Map
Helena National Forest

This map illustrates the Helena National Forest and its surrounding areas. Key features include:

- Towns and Cities:** Helena (marked with a star), Great Falls, Butte, Anaconda, Philipsburg, Townsend, and Harlowton.
- Roads:** Major highways shown include US-90, US-12, US-89, US-15, US-287, and US-43.
- National Forests and Land:** Surrounding areas include Lolo NF, And Clark NF, Deer Lodge NF, Gallatin NF, and Benton Lake National Wildlife Refuge.
- Geographic Features:** Mountain ranges such as the Big Belt Mountains, Little Lewis Mountains, and Crazy Mountains are labeled. Other features include the Scapegoat Divide, Flint Creek Range, and various wilderness areas like the Gates of the Mountains and Scapegoat.
- Infrastructure:** The Canyon Ferry Dam is marked near Helena.

Big Timber

Statement Of Purpose

The Helena National Forest will continue to be a desirable area for off-highway vehicle use. Although Forest Travel Management originally developed in 1976 was revised in 1984, recent public involvement indicates additional changes are required. These revisions are necessary due to changing needs of the forest user and as a result of increased public participation in the land management process. Increased popularity of off-highway vehicle use was not foreseen during Forest Plan development and should be addressed. OHV Plans have been developed for many National Forests but differ greatly due to varying public use trends and land allocations at each Forest. Off-highway vehicle opportunities do exist on the Helena Forest but require additional planning, development and management. At the present time, the three ranger districts on the Helena Forest manage many of their OHV opportunities independent of adjacent districts and land management agencies. The objectives of this project are to: 1) identify current OHV regulations, policy and direction which affect management of Helena Forest lands, 2) review and analyze existing OHV use and management on the Helena Forest, 3) provide recommendations for future OHV use and management on the Helena National Forest, and 4) identify a systematic process for OHV trail designation and or development.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

Much has been written regarding off-road vehicle use in the United States during the past 20 years. The growth and popularity of the industry have been recognized in many publications. As the recreational opportunities have grown, so too have land use conflicts. "To manage the public land fairly is exceptionally difficult and is getting more so every day as the resources grow scarcer and the competition among different users mounts" (Sheridan 1979). Although this project is devoted specifically to the OHV management situation on the Helena National Forest, a review of several source documents was extremely beneficial. The following publications provided off-highway vehicle background information and project direction.

1. **Off-Road Vehicle Use: A Management Challenge**
This book is an accumulation of individual papers which were presented at a conference regarding the recreational use of off-road vehicles. The conference, held in March of 1980, was co-sponsored by the United States Department of Agriculture and the Office of Environmental Quality. Articles within the book discuss a variety of OHV issues and perspectives for both the user and the land manager.
2. **Off-Road Vehicles On Public Land: Council On Environmental Quality**
This publication reviews Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 which regulate the use of off-road vehicles on public lands. Also discussed were the existing use and impacts of off-road vehicle use on public lands. Although published in 1979, this document clearly identifies land use conflicts which continue to occur as a result of unmanaged OHV use.
3. **A Guide To Off-Road Motorcycle Trail Design and Construction**
Published by the American Motorcyclist Association in 1984, this document provides direction for the development of motorcycle trails. It was written by Joe Wernex, a professional in the field of forest management and trail construction. Mr. Wernex has identified proper trail design and construction techniques which will minimize resource damage yet provide desirable motorized trail experiences.
4. **OHV Opportunities On The Stanislaus**
This paper was prepared as a student project for the Professional Development for Outdoor Recreation Management Program at Clemson University (1988). While the paper focuses upon OHV use on the Stanislaus National Forest, conflicts and opportunities identified are similar to those occurring on National Forest lands elsewhere.
5. **Planning For Trailbike Recreation, Part I and Part II: USDI Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service**
These technical publications are a collection of papers which were delivered at 14 Motorcycle Industry Council workshops between 1977 and 1980. The presentations at the workshops represent diverse opinions regarding off-highway vehicle use from the viewpoint of: OHV user groups, industry representatives, and federal land managers.

III. METHODOLOGY

The intent of this project is to recommend off-highway vehicle direction for the Helena National Forest. Accomplishment of this objective can only be attained through detailed research of the subject matter. A review was conducted of current literature regarding the use of OHVs on public lands. Recent publications and documents discussing OHV management and use throughout the country were reviewed.

Of particular importance was a review of the existing off-highway vehicle situation in the state of Montana and the Helena National Forest. Data and documentation of past travel management planning were noted and evaluated. Also of great value in the preparation of this paper was a complete review of the Forest Plan adopted in 1986. The plan contains goals, objectives, and direction for the future management of recreation and travel on the Helena National Forest.

Current off-highway vehicle use and management on the Forest were discussed with other forest personnel. Many of these employees from the three ranger districts are directly involved with OHV and travel plan management. The land managers who deal with a variety of management and user conflicts on a routine basis provide much of the input for this project. Additional input for this paper was obtained from personnel on the adjacent Deerlodge and the Lewis and Clark National Forests.

The snowmobile program within the state is primarily managed by the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife and Parks (MDFWP). Cooperative Agreements have been developed and maintained between the Department, local snowmobile clubs, and National Forests, including the Helena. Coordination between the MDFWP and the Helena National Forest is vital for the snowmobile program and the newly developed state OHV program. As a result, input for this paper was also obtained from personnel with the MDFWP.

Several of the local motorized user groups were an important source of information regarding off-highway vehicle use on the Helena National Forest. These organizations were contacted specifically regarding current motorized use on the Forest and offered valuable suggestions for future OHV management. OHV organizations indicated their wish to be actively involved in all future travel planning for the Forest.

Since the advent of off-highway vehicle use, various regulations have been enacted and policy statements developed. One goal of this paper is to identify all existing national and state regulations which may affect OHV use on the Helena National Forest. In addition, both National and Regional Forest Service policy and direction are reviewed and documented. Knowledge and understanding of the following regulations and policy are vital for managing an effective OHV program on the Helena Forest.

The National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969 identifies a process to help public land managers achieve sound management decisions with the input of the public. "The purposes of the Act are: to declare a national policy which will encourage productive and enjoyable harmony between man and his environment; to promote efforts which will prevent or eliminate damage to the environment and biosphere and stimulate the health and welfare of man; to enrich the understanding of the ecological systems and natural resources important to the Nation; and to establish a Council on Environmental Quality." Subsequent NEPA regulations have been enacted which establish Forest Service policy and procedures for implementation of the Act.

In 1981 the National Environmental Policy Act Revised Implementing Procedures were enacted. Those policies and procedures were incorporated into the agency directives system as Forest Service Manual Chapter 1950. Specific direction was identified reflecting the type and degree of NEPA action required. Of key importance in that manual is reference to the scoping process and its importance in determining public concerns. It still provides procedures which must be followed for any federal action.

Executive Order 11644, Use of Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Lands, (Appendix A) was signed by then President Richard Nixon on February 8, 1972. The purpose of the order was "to establish policies and provide procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands". Each respective public land management agency was directed to develop and issue regulations which provide designation of specific areas and trails for off-road vehicle use. In addition, areas where off-road use was prohibited were also to be identified. Agencies were to ensure that the public had adequate opportunity for participation in the development of such regulations. The Order also directed the public land agencies to monitor the effects of off-road vehicle use on lands under their jurisdiction.

To clarify agency authority in defining zones of use by off-road vehicles on public lands, Executive Order 11644 was amended. On May 24, 1977, President Jimmy Carter signed into law Executive Order 11989, Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands (Appendix B). This Order directed public land management agencies to immediately close areas to off-road vehicle use whenever it was determined that such off road use was causing or would cause considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat or cultural or historic resources of particular areas or trails of the public land. It should be noted that Executive Order 11989 also authorized each agency head to adopt the policy that portions of the public lands within his jurisdiction shall be closed to use by off-road vehicles except those areas or trails which are suitable and specifically designated as open. "While Executive Order 11989 cleared away any lingering doubts about the responsibilities and authority of the land management agencies, it did not resolve the issue of ORV use of the public lands" (Sheridan 1979).

Many Federal Regulations have been established regarding the use of motorized vehicles on federal lands. Laws pertaining to the use of motorized vehicles on National Forest lands are contained in the Code Of Federal Regulations (CFR) Title 36: Parks, Forests and Public Property. The following regulations should be noted during the travel planning and implementation process:

1. Part 212 - Administration of the Forest Development Transportation System
 - a. 212.3 - Forest development transportation plan
 - b. 212.7 - Road system management
2. Part 217 - Requesting Review of National Forest Plans and Project Decisions
 - a. 217.4 - Decisions not subject to appeal
 - b. 217.7 - Levels of appeal
 - c. 217.8 - Appeal process sequence
3. Part 219 - Planning
 - a. 219.6 - Public participation
 - b. 219.21 - Recreation resource
4. Part 261 - Prohibitions
 - a. 261.12 - Forest development roads and trails
 - b. 261.13 - Use of vehicles off roads
 - c. 261.53 - Special closures
 - d. 261.54 - Forest development roads
 - e. 261.55 - Forest development trails
 - f. 261.56 - Use of vehicles off forest development roads
5. Part 295 - Use Of Motor Vehicles Off Forest Development Roads
 - a. 295.2 - Planning and designation for use of vehicles off forest development roads
 - b. 295.3 - Public participation

- c. 295.4 - Public information
- d. 295.5 - Monitoring effects of vehicle use off forest development roads
- e. 295.6 - Revision of off-road vehicle management plans

Regulations in 36 CFR 212.7 state "traffic on roads is subject to State traffic laws where applicable except when in conflict with the rules established under 36 CFR Part 261". The following Montana State Statutes relate to the use of off-highway vehicle use.

1. 23-2-631 - Operation on Public Roads and Streets
1)"No person shall operate a snowmobile upon a controlled access highway or facility at any time. Snowmobile operation may be permitted on the roadway or shoulder of any public road or highway, state highway, county road, or city street located within the boundaries of any municipality only in the event that the street, road, or highway is drifted or covered by snow to such an extent that travel thereon by other motor vehicles is impractical or impossible; the operator has received permission or is otherwise authorized for such travel by the municipality in the case of town or city streets, the board of county commissioners for county roads, or the state highway patrol for all other highways; or such operation has been specifically so authorized on municipal streets by a municipal ordinance."
2. 23-2-801 - (Temporary) Definitions
"Off-highway vehicle means a self-propelled vehicle used for recreation or cross-country travel on public lands, trails, easements, lakes, rivers, or streams. The term includes but is not limited to motorcycles, quadricycles, dune buggies, amphibious vehicles, air cushion vehicles, and any other means of land transportation deriving motive power from any source other than muscle or wind." The off-highway vehicle designation does not include snowmobiles.
3. 23-2-804 - Decal Required
Except as provided in 23-2-802, no off-highway vehicle may be operated by any person for recreation on public lands in Montana unless there is displayed in a conspicuous place a decal, in a form prescribed by the department of justice and issued by the county treasurer, as visual proof that fees have been paid for the current year. Passenger vehicles such as Jeeps, 4x4 trucks, Broncos, etc., that are licensed and street legal do not need OHV decals for off-highway use of public lands. Trail bikes, ATV's, and dune buggies do need an OHV decal for off-highway use on public lands even if they are street legal.

In addition to State and Federal laws regulating the use of off-highway vehicles on public lands, the Forest Service has developed policy direction and guidelines. National policy, supplemented by Regional and Forest policy, concerning motorized travel on forest lands is contained primarily within two Forest Manuals: Title 2300 Recreation, Wilderness, and Related Resources, and Title 7700 Transportation System. Handbooks for each of these two manuals provide added technical direction. Listed below are the major directives for the management of off-highway vehicles on forest lands.

Title 2300 Recreation, Wilderness & Related Resources

Chapter 2350 WO Amendment 2300-90-1 Effective 6/1/90

1. 2352 - Road Recreation Management
2352.1 - Four Wheel Drive Ways. Manage four-wheel drive ways as part of the Forest Development Road System (FSM 7703).

2. 2353 - Forest Development Trails
 - 2353.2 - Types of Trails. Develop trails that are suited to a variety of modes of travel such as hiking, horseback riding, motor biking, and so forth. Use the appropriate trail guide(s) found in FSH 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook, chapter 2.3.
 - 2353.23 - Right-Of-Way-Protection. Use cooperative agreements or acquisition authorities to provide reasonable protection to designed trails and their corridor.
 - 2353.25 - Management Of Trail Use. See FSH 2309.18, Trails Management Handbook, Chapter 4.
3. 2355 - Off-Road Vehicle Use Management
 - 2355.02 - Objective. "Provide travel opportunities for both motorized and nonmotorized recreation activities on trails and areas that minimize adverse effects on the land and resources, that promote public safety, and that minimize conflicts with other uses of National Forest System lands."
 - 2355.03 - Policy.
 - 2355.05 - Definitions.
 - 2355.1 - Planning.
 - 2355.2 - Administration.
 - 2355.3 - Regulation of Use.
 - 2355.4 - Monitoring Effects of Off-Road Vehicle Use.
 - 2355.5 - Revision of Off-Road Vehicle Management Direction.

Forest Service Handbook 2309.18 Trails Management

1. 2.32 - Motorized Trails
 - 2.32a - Bike Trail Guide. "Generally, biking on the National Forest is a trail-oriented activity with emphasis upon featuring the forest setting."
 - 2.32b - "All-Terrain Vehicles (ATV) Trail Guide. ATV use should occur on trails and routes designated for other motorized uses which fit the ATV trail guide specifications. These include bike and snowmobile trails and four-wheel drive ways. These trails and ways provide a variety of experience with emphasis upon bringing the users into concert with the natural setting."
 - 2.32c - Four-Wheel Drive Way Guide. "Four-wheel drive ways generally utilize facilities constructed for other purposes. Plan, develop, and manage four-wheel drive ways in accordance with policies and procedures in FSM 7700 and 7709.56."
 - "Identify some snow-covered system roads for four-wheel use. Plan ways that are not used for skiing, snowmobiles, or plowed for regular vehicular use. This may reduce conflicts that occasionally occur where four wheelers have damaged groomed and cross-country ski trails."
 - 2.32d - Snowmobile Trail Guide. "Snowmobiling is often done in large groups, so the needs of large numbers of trail users must be considered in the design and location of snowmobile facilities. Incorporate opportunities for picnicking, off-trail spaces, and trail sections of varying difficulty into the system. Also, because some snowmobiling is done at night, give special attention to posting signs and reducing hazards."
 - "When possible, use all or parts of existing snowcovered system roads that are not planned for other users, such as wheeled-vehicle or nonmotorized use."
2. 4.1 - Trail Operation. "Trail operation involves management of the type, volume, and season of trail use to achieve the desired trail management objectives. Elements of trail operation include: monitoring the volume of use, the type of use, and the effects of use on the trail management objectives; implementing trail restrictions; and informing the user through guides and signs all of the use that is intended for each trail."

3. 4.12 - Managing Trail Use. "Restrict traffic on trails to meet trail management objectives, where traffic exceeds safe use levels, when there is significant user conflict, when unacceptable resource damage is occurring, or when excessive operation and maintenance costs are resulting from the volume, type, or season of use."

Title 7700 Transportation System

1. 7709.1 - Internal Service-wide Handbooks
2. 7710 - Planning
3. 7723 - Trails
4. 7730 - Operation and Maintenance : WO Amendment Effective 11/27/90
7730.2 - Objective. "Operate and maintain the forest development transportation system in a manner to provide cost effective support to management direction and safe travel to users of the system while protecting the environment, adjacent resources, and the public investment."
7730.3 - Policy, including policies for managing forest visitor traffic.

A recent memo from Regional Forester John Mumma, Region One, dated October 31, 1990 provides the following policy direction regarding OHV/Snowmobile use on Forest Development Roads.

1. Because OHVs and snowmobiles do not meet existing state codes for vehicle equipment and licensing requirements, their use should not be mixed with street legal vehicles such as: jeeps, 4x4 pickups, etc.
2. A Forest Development Road can be designated as a seasonal snowmobile or OHV trail only if regular motorized vehicle traffic has been restricted.
3. A Forest Development Road can be designated a yearlong trail only if it is removed from the road inventory and maintained as a trail.
4. OHV and snowmobile use can be allowed on restricted Forest Roads if management objectives determined this use acceptable.

IV. ANALYSIS

The topic of Off-Highway Vehicle use on National Forest lands has been documented increasingly during the past 15 years. The most important aspect of any OHV planning document for a specific management area is an analysis of the current situation. It is mandatory to have sufficient, factual information regarding existing management, use, and concerns to evaluate recreational opportunities and provide future management direction. The following review of the existing off-highway vehicle situation on the Helena National Forest will provide the basis for recommendations contained within this paper.

A. Helena National Forest Off-Highway Vehicle Management

Recent history of travel and off-highway vehicle management on the Helena Forest is similar to other forests in Region One. Executive Order #11644 directed all land managing agencies to prepare a plan for Off-Road Vehicle Travel on federal land. In response, the Chief of the Forest Service established a target date of December 31, 1976 for complying with that Order. The Helena National Forest evaluated the existing Off-Road Vehicle use during development of their Travel Plan. The Chief's policy at that time stated that ORVs were a valid use of National Forest land and that all National Forest lands outside of Wilderness and Primitive Areas were to remain open for this purpose unless specifically excluded or restricted. That policy was incorporated into the Helena Forest Travel Plan which was implemented in 1976. A major revision of the Travel Plan was completed in 1984 based upon public participation resulting from Forest Plan development.

The Environmental Impact Statement (EIS) for the Helena Forest Plan identified snowmobiling as the only major OHV recreation activity on the forest. It indicated that public support was expressed for increases in both motorized and nonmotorized dispersed recreation. The EIS further stated that "all Forest Plan alternatives provide enough open roads to meet projected demands for roaded natural and semi-primitive motorized recreation". Apparently, OHV use wasn't identified as a major issue during the scoping process for the Forest Plan. Public interest at that time was primarily focused on the issue of roaded areas versus roadless areas.

The Helena Forest Plan was developed and is being implemented through public input and involvement. Based on minimal input received from off-highway vehicle users, the Plan's travel management emphasis was primarily placed on road management. The following two Forest Plan Goals were developed from the issues and concerns identified.

1. Develop and implement a road management program with road use and travel restrictions that are responsive to resource protection needs and public concerns.
2. Provide a range of quality outdoor recreation, including motorized and nonmotorized opportunities, in an undeveloped forest environment.

The Forest Plan indicated that motorized recreation use would continue and that additional restrictions on road and trail use would be necessary. Criteria, identified in the Forest Plan, used to determine road, trail, or area restrictions were: safety, conflicting use, resource protection, economics, facility protection, public support, and management objectives. In addition, the Forest Plan recognized the following guidelines developed with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife, and Parks (MDFWP) to decide which roads, trails and areas should be restricted or open to maintain or improve big game security.

1. Road management will be implemented to at least maintain big game habitat capability and hunting opportunity. To provide for a first week bull elk harvest that does not exceed 40 percent of the total bull harvest, roads will be managed during the general big game hunting season to maintain open road densities with the following limits.

Existing % Hiding Cover FS definition 1)	Existing % Hiding Cover MDFWP definition 2)	Max Open Rd Density
56	80	2.4 mi/sq.mi
49	70	1.9 mi/sq.mi
42	60	1.2 mi/sq.mi
35	50	0.1 mi/sq.mi

1) A timber stand which conceals 90 percent or more of a standing elk at 200 feet.

2) A stand of coniferous trees having a crown closure greater than 40 percent.

The existing hiding cover to open road density ratio should be determined over a large geographic area, such as a timber sale analysis area, a third order drainage, or an elk herd unit.

2. Elk calving grounds and nursery areas will be closed to motorized vehicles during peak use by elk. Calving is usually in late May through mid-June and nursery areas are used in late June through July.
3. All winter range areas will be closed to vehicles between December 1 and May 15.
4. At restricted roads, trails, and areas, signs will be posted which tell:
 - a. Type of restriction.
 - b. Reason for restriction.
 - c. Time period for restriction.
 - d. Cooperating agencies.
5. Roads that will be closed will be signed during construction or reconstruction telling the closure date and the reason for closure.
6. Enforcement is a shared responsibility. Enforcement needs will be coordinated with the MDFWP.
7. Opened forest roads will normally have a designed speed limit of less than 15 miles per hour. Exact design speeds will be determined through project planning. Loop roads are not recommended and will be avoided in most cases.
8. Representatives from the Helena Forest and MDFWP will meet annually to review the existing Travel Plan.
9. The Forest Road Management Program will be developed in conjunction with MDFWP and interested groups or individuals. The Road Management Program will contain the specific seasonal and yearlong road, trail, and area restrictions and will be based upon the goals and objectives of the management areas in Chapter III of the Forest Plan.

General direction for the use of off-highway vehicles is also provided within the Forest Plan. Specific land management allocation areas were delineated with associated guidelines affecting off-highway vehicle use. The Forest Road Management Program will be used to review, evaluate and implement the goals and standards of the management areas in the Forest Plan with regard to road, trail, and area wide motorized vehicle use.

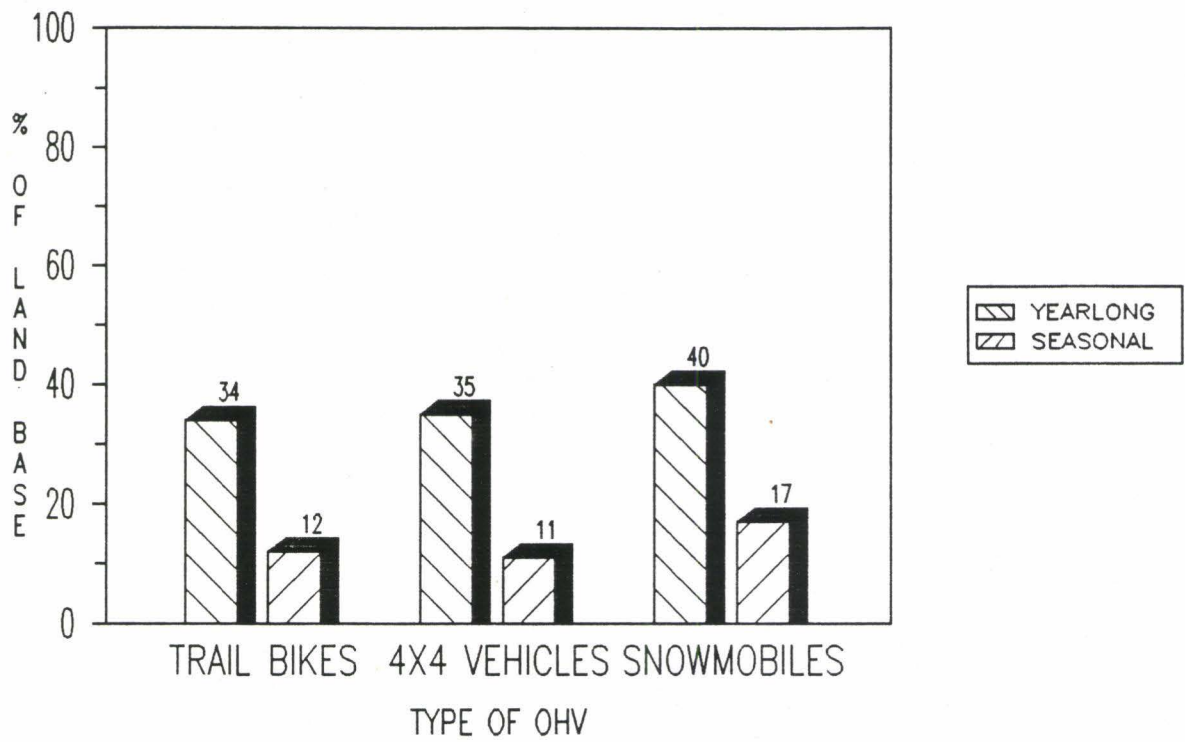
As previously mentioned, on-the-ground management of the Helena National Forest is provided by three ranger districts with offices located in Helena, Lincoln, and Townsend, Montana. Although a Travel Plan was implemented in 1976 with subsequent revisions, no Forest or district OHV plans have been developed. Discussions with personnel at the three ranger districts indicate that past and current OHV management activities have never been fully coordinated. Site specific OHV management has often occurred with little input from adjoining districts or National Forests. This lack of coordination has caused management inconsistencies. It has also resulted in a lack of sufficient public input from user groups regarding off-highway vehicle management.

OHV Use Over General Forest Environment

The Forest Plan directed that the Helena National Forest would generally be open to vehicles except for roads, trails, or areas which may be restricted. The entire Helena Forest was divided into 23 management areas, each with different management goals, resource potentials, and limitations. Based upon Forest Plan direction, off-highway vehicle use was prohibited or restricted in designated areas and has been identified on the Forest Travel Plan Map. Motorized prohibitions and restrictions were developed through the public involvement process for the following purposes: 1) wilderness, 2) nonmotorized recreation, 3) wildlife security, and 4) winter range or elk calving. An inventory of areas closed or restricted to motorized vehicle use is attached (Appendix D).

A variety of OHV use does occur on dispersed lands throughout the Helena National Forest. Many of the local motorized users have expressed their concern over the number of acres which have been closed to their use. A review of the Helena National Forest Travel Plan indicates: approximately 34% of the land base is closed yearlong to trail bikes, 35% is closed yearlong to 4-wheel drive vehicles, and 40% is closed yearlong to snowmobiles. Most of these lands are closed to motorized travel yearlong due to wilderness and roadless area designations. The Travel Plan Map also indicates areas with seasonal motorized restrictions which are based upon wildlife and other resource protection needs. Seasonal restrictions affect an additional: 11% of the 4-wheel drive opportunities, 12% of the trail bike opportunities, and 17% of the snowmobile opportunities. (Please refer to the graph on the following page.) It must be noted however, not all remaining lands on the Helena Forest available for motorized use provide desirable OHV land characteristics.

HELENA NATIONAL FOREST MOTORIZED AREA RESTRICTIONS



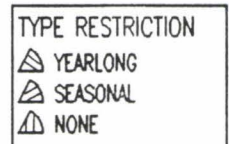
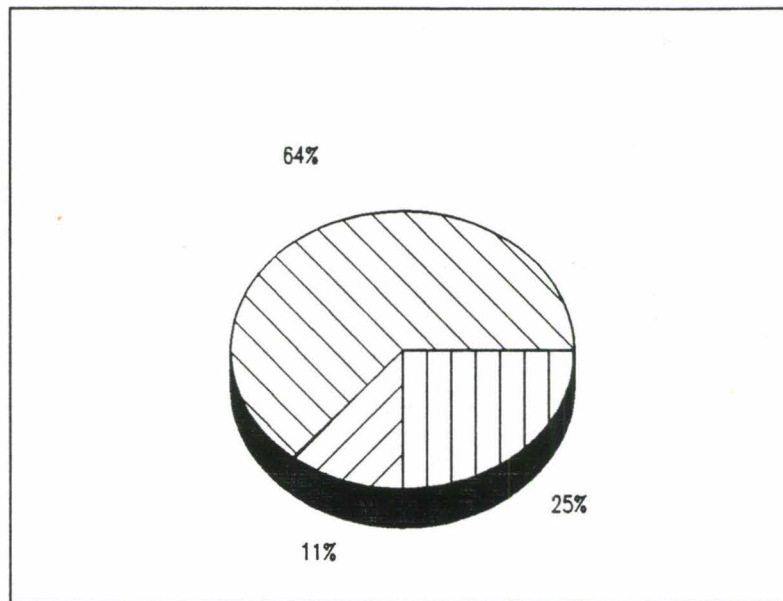
PERCENT RESTRICTED

OHV Use on Forest System Trails

Motorized restrictions on system trails have been identified on the Forest Travel Plan Map. Unless specifically designated as a motorized route, trail access within a restricted or closed area is also restricted. In addition, other trails are occasionally closed or restricted to motorized travel for resource protection or to enhance wildlife security. Until recently, 36 CFR 261.12 prohibited the use of any motorized vehicle in excess of 40 inches in width on a system trail. This regulation is no longer in effect and future trail vehicle restrictions should be implemented based upon; 1) type of vehicle, and 2) type of traffic, and or vehicle characteristics (Appendix C). The Lincoln Ranger District has implemented a 48 inch width restriction on several of their trails in response to new OHV direction. Many Helena Forest trails available for motorized use do not have current width restrictions which are needed to regulate use and ensure safety.

Although 4x4 vehicles will occasionally attempt to access forest trails, the majority of motorized trail use includes: trail bikes, ATVs and snowmobiles. The number of trails and associated miles which are available for OHV use vary per district. Once again, many of the motorized users believe that an excessive number of trails have been closed or restricted for their activities. OHV groups have expressed their belief that the Helena National Forest has a disproportionately large number of nonmotorized trails and insufficient motorized opportunities. An inventory of Forest Trails with associated motorized restrictions has been included in this paper (Appendix E). A review of this inventory indicates that 87% of the established trail miles on the Helena Ranger District are closed to ATVs and trail bikes. Forest-wide that percentage drops to 64%. In addition, 11% of the remaining total trail miles on the Forest have some type of seasonal motorized restriction. (Please refer to the chart on the following page.) Many of the designated OHV trails located on the Forest are old roads which have been transferred to the trail system. While they may meet existing Forest Service standards, they were not designed or modified for off-highway vehicles. Quite probably, these trails do not provide a full range of desired OHV experiences.

HELENA NATIONAL FOREST TRAILS MOTORIZED TRAIL RESTRICTIONS



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL MILES

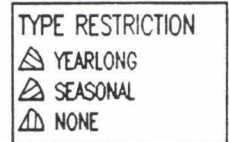
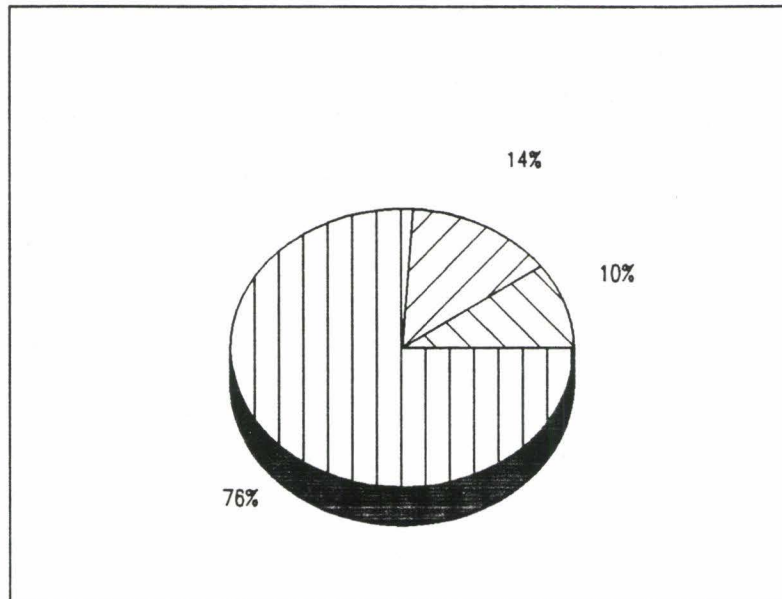
OHV Use on Forest Development Roads

The term off-highway vehicle generally refers to the use of a specific type of motorized vehicle off established roads. For this paper, Forest Development Roads are those identified in the Helena Forest Transportation Information System (TIS). Roads vary in character from the high standard "collector roads" which are heavily traveled to "local roads" of minimum standard receiving little motorized use. Montana state law and regulations apply to all forest roads open to regular vehicular traffic. Included in these state regulations are motor vehicle equipment and driver licensing requirements. Because many off-highway vehicles do not meet these requirements, they are not allowed to operate on the Forest Road System. OHV use on forest roads by unlicensed vehicles may only be authorized if other passenger vehicle traffic has been prohibited.

Because the Helena Forest has not designated "four-wheel drive ways", the legitimate use of roads for off-highway vehicles has not been recognized. However, many of our recreating publics continue to use Forest Development Roads for their off-highway vehicle activities. Very few ATVs and trail bikes which currently utilize forest roads are operated legally because they fail to meet state licensing requirements. Although this is generally true throughout most of the Forest, numerous OHVs in the Lincoln community are street legal. Most 4x4 vehicle use on open forest roads is not prohibited because the vehicles are "street legal". Snowmobiles operate primarily on forest roads usually after the roads are snow covered and normal wheeled vehicle traffic is impossible or impractical, thereby complying with existing state statutes. While many of the snowmobile routes are signed to regulate wheeled vehicle traffic, no legal restrictions have been implemented.

Despite the fact that much of the existing OHV use occurring on forest roads is illegal, road restrictions and closures have created a great deal of animosity from the OHV community. They interpret any restriction of motorized access on existing forest roads as proof that the Forest Service is further eliminating their recreation opportunities. While these road restrictions do affect some of the ATV and trail bike users, they impact to a greater degree the large number of 4x4 vehicle users in the Helena area. The 1990 TIS for the Helena Forest indicates a total of 1,803 miles of system roads. Of that number, 10% are closed yearlong and 14% of the roads are restricted seasonally. The remaining 76% of the forest roads which are open yearlong, may provide some recreational opportunities for licensed 4x4 motor vehicles. (Please refer to the chart on the following page.) However, many of these open roads do not provide the recreation challenge or experience sought by 4x4 enthusiasts. In addition, Forest Roads utilized as designated snowmobile trails must be closed to 4-wheel drive vehicles during the winter.

HELENA NATIONAL FOREST ROADS MOTORIZED ROAD RESTRICTIONS



PERCENTAGE OF TOTAL MILES

B. OHV Users of the Helena National Forest

The number and types of recreational activities on each National Forest are based upon factors such as: land suitability, available opportunities, uniqueness of each, climate and season of use, economics, local customs, and most importantly, the size of the local population. All of these factors play some role in the type and amount of off-highway vehicle use on the Helena National Forest.

A finding released in 1988 by the national Task Force on Outdoor Recreation Resources and Opportunities stated, "individuals make their largest and most intensive investments of time, labor, and income in outdoor quality where they do most of their outdoor recreation - at their residences or in neighborhood and regional parks and recreation areas within 15 minutes to an hour of their residences" (Action Plan For Americans Outdoors 1988). The Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association indicated that a majority of riders most frequently utilize trails within 50 to 60 miles of their homes. Accurate user information has not been obtained for off-highway vehicle use on the Helena National Forest but personal observation and discussions with other Forest personnel and motorized user groups indicate that the majority of use occurs from within the Helena Forest's area-of-influence.

Although OHV recreationists from the Butte and Bozeman, Montana areas do frequent the southern end of the Elkhorn Mountains, the greatest percentage of use on the Helena Forest occurs from local users. As noted in the Introduction, the estimated population for the Helena Forest's area-of-influence is 145,800. OHV users of the Helena Forest are located in rural areas, small towns and the larger cities of Helena and Great Falls.

It is difficult to determine the actual number of off-highway vehicles on the Helena National Forest. In western Montana, the use of 4-wheel drive vehicles (pickup trucks, Jeeps, Broncos, etc.) is quite extensive. It must be noted however, that many 4-wheel drive vehicles never venture off forest, county or state roads. Noted also is the fact that 4-wheel drive vehicles are often used to transport other OHVs such as trail bikes, ATVs, and snowmobiles to trailhead facilities.

Snowmobile use is quite popular in the Helena area and Forest lands provide much of the accessible land base. Trail counters indicate that over 19,000 snowmobiles used the groomed trail system on the Helena Ranger District during the winter of 1989-90. While the majority of snowmobile use does occur on established groomed trails, a substantial number of snowmobilers prefer to ride in dispersed ungroomed areas. The total number of Recreation Visitor Days (RVDs) for snowmobiling on the Helena National Forest was estimated to be over 6,000 for that year. An RVD is defined as recreational use which totals 12 visitor hours.

Recent statistics, 1989, published by the Motorcycle Industry Council do provide a method to estimate the number of some off-highway vehicles that may frequent the Helena National Forest (Motorcycle Statistical Annual 1989). Estimates for the total number of ATVs, off-road motorcycles, and enduro type motorcycles in the state of Montana are 30,400 vehicles. Population within the area-of-influence for the Helena National Forest is approximately 18% of the total state population of 805,000. Assuming there is a direct correlation between the local population and the percent of the Montana OHV population, estimates can be determined. Based upon these figures (18% of 30,400 OHVs), there are approximately 5,472 of the above mentioned off-highway vehicles in the area-of-influence for the Helena National Forest.

The number of off-highway vehicles within the Forest's area-of-influence is not an exact indication of the number of motorized users on the Helena National Forest. Many of the motorized recreationists may operate on private lands or other nearby federal lands: Bureau Of Land Management, Lewis & Clark National Forest and Deerlodge National Forest. Motorized use estimates can be obtained

however based upon the number of OHVs (ATVs and trail bikes), within the Helena Forest's area-of-influence. The Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association has stated that the average rider will ride an estimated 12 days per year. If only 50% of the OHV owners within the area-of-influence operate on the Helena National Forest, that would still represent 2,736 users. At an average of 12 riding days per year, 2,736 riders would account for 32,832 rider days per year. A rider day, as defined by the Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association, is any ride which takes place on public lands and in which travel time and the ride consumes 8 hours or more. Rides of 8 hours or less would be considered a 1/2 day. As determined by the Forest Service, there may be approximately 21,900 RVDs of ATV and trail bike use on the Forest. The total RVDs for snowmobile, ATV, and trail bike use on the Helena Forest is approximately 28,000. This figure does not include the undetermined number of 4-wheel drive vehicles also recreating on the Helena National Forest. Despite a lack of actual motorized user data, it should be noted that the various types of off-highway vehicle use on the Helena National Forest is quite significant.

Each ranger district receives comments and input concerning OHV management from individuals and organizations within the area-of-influence. This input is often received only as a result of implementing and enforcing travel restrictions. As frequently occurs, the Helena Forest does not hear from a user group until conflicts develop. The vast majority of public involvement regarding the management of OHVs on the Helena Forest is supplied by organized user groups. Although only a small percentage of motorized users belong to an organized group, these groups represent and promote the interests of most motorized users.

The oldest and largest of the existing motorized groups in the state of Montana and Helena area is the Montana Snowmobile Association. This organization, with 26 clubs located throughout the state, was formally organized in 1972. In 1973, state legislation was passed which provided funds for a state-wide snowmobile program. Currently, the Montana Snowmobile Association together with the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks, groom over 3,100 miles of trails within the state. To a great extent, these trails are located on National Forest lands.

Local snowmobile clubs which operate on the Helena National Forest include the Ponderosa Snow Warriors of Lincoln and the Helena Snowdrifters. Both clubs have actively participated in the management of snowmobile trails in their area for many years. Snowmobile trails on all three districts have been maintained under Cooperative Agreements between the local clubs, the Helena National Forest and the Montana Department of Fish, Wildlife & Parks. Members of both snowmobile clubs continue to work closely with Forest personnel to resolve existing management issues. Although the snowmobile club located in Great Falls grooms and primarily uses trails on the Lewis and Clark National Forest, they also enjoy snowmobiling in the Lincoln area. They were contacted regarding this paper and indicated their desire to be notified of future snowmobile management activities on the Helena Forest.

A second state-wide motorized user organization is the Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association. This group primarily focuses on the use of ATVs, off-road trail bikes and enduro bikes which can be ridden on or off road. Recently this organization has become quite vocal regarding management of off-highway vehicles on federal lands. This is partially in response to increased travel restrictions affecting their activities. Three local OHV clubs affiliated with the state organization are: the Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association, the Great Falls ATV Association, and the recently organized Capital Trail Bike Riders of Helena. In addition, the Rocky Mountain Trail Bike Riders of Helena have been active for several years and work closely with the Helena Forest. Members of the this club indicated they organized originally because they believed their interests were not properly represented during the development and implementation of the Helena Forest Plan. Both the Helena and Great Falls clubs have stated their concerns regarding the existing travel restrictions and the lack of developed motorized trails on the Helena National Forest. These clubs have expressed their desire to assist forest managers with the identification and development of additional OHV opportunities.

An additional motorized user group interested in the management of OHV opportunities on federal lands is the Montana 4x4 Association. This organization represents the interests of a large OHV group in the state of Montana. Two clubs affiliated with the state organization are located within the Helena Forest area-of-influence. The Cascade County 4-Wheelers are located in Great Falls and recreate primarily within the Lewis and Clark National Forest. The Frontier 4-Wheelers are located in Helena and recreate primarily within the boundaries of the Helena National Forest. Although a great number of 4x4 vehicles exist within the Helena area-of-influence, membership in the local club is quite small. Here again, the interests of most 4x4 vehicle owners recreating on the Helena Forest are promoted by the local organization. Club members have indicated a desire to assist in the management of OHV opportunities on the Helena Forest.

It is essential that forest land managers actively involve the public in land management decisions. Management activities involving the use of off-highway vehicles on Helena Forest lands are particularly important to many individuals and organized groups. While there are a variety of publics to contact regarding proposed OHV management, it is vitally important to contact all of the affected motorized user groups. A list of individuals representing the interests of various motorized users on the Helena National Forest is identified in this paper (Appendix F).

C. OHV Management Concerns on the Helena National Forest

Evaluation of existing off-highway vehicle management and use on the Forest requires identification of specific concerns and conflicts. "Recognizing that a diversity of ORV problems - rather than a problem - exists is a critical first step in proposing effective solutions" (Rasor 1980). The following concerns are based upon observation, discussions with other forest employees, and input from motorized users. It should be noted, these issues are presented with the sole intent of improving future OHV opportunities and management on the Helena Forest.

1. Due to a prior lack of public input, **the Forest Plan does not adequately address off-highway vehicle travel**. The plan stated that open roads would provide ample motorized opportunities. In fact, open roads provide motorized opportunities **only** for "street legal" off-highway vehicles such as, 4x4 trucks and other licensed OHVs. As a result, the demand for other types of OHV recreation on the Forest was not identified as a major issue.
2. **Inconsistencies exist between Forest Plan Management direction and current on-the-ground use**. An example is the designated OHV trail located within Trout Creek Canyon on the Helena Ranger District. This canyon is located within an R1 management area and identified in the Forest Plan as an area that provides a variety of semi-primitive **nonmotorized** recreation.
3. Executive Order 11989, was signed into law following implementation of the Helena Forest Travel Plan in 1976. This Order directed that suitable areas could be specifically designated as "open" for off-highway vehicle use. However, **the Helena Forest has never conducted an analysis to determine the suitability of lands previously designated as "open" for OHV use**. "Executive Orders 11644 and 11989 have been poorly implemented by the major land management agencies; hence ORV environmental damage and impairment of other recreationists' enjoyment of the resources are still out of control" (Sheridan 1979).
4. **OHV opportunities do exist on the Forest but haven't been sufficiently identified or developed**. Only 7% of the Forest's total trail system has been designated for OHV use (Appendix D). Although other trails may be available for off-highway vehicle use, they haven't been designed, constructed, maintained or signed for that use. Many of the trails used by OHVs do not provide the experiences or distances sought by motorized recreationists.

An extensive snowmobile trail system has been established on the Forest through the cooperation of local snowmobile clubs. Existing snowmobile concerns which need to be resolved include: wheeled vehicle use on groomed trails, lack of right-of-way for many snowmobile trails, legal and adequate trail signing, and use of snowmobile trails as winter haul routes for logging.

There are currently no designated "four-wheel drive ways" for 4x4 vehicle use on the Helena Forest. Although several of the Forest Roads do provide that opportunity, they have not been identified or managed for that use. Four wheel drive opportunities for winter travel over snow covered roads should also be identified and designated.

In addition to the managed system trails on the Forest, there are numerous miles of nonsystem trails available and utilized by off-highway vehicle users. These trails and acres of open unrestricted lands do provide extensive OHV opportunities. The desirability and effects of this use upon forest resources has not been fully determined.

5. **There has been inadequate OHV planning and management on the Forest to meet existing use and demand.** Due to a number of factors, personnel have been unable to develop and implement an OHV Program on the Helena Forest responsive to public needs. Too frequently, land managers are reactive to OHV issues and conflicts as opposed to being pro-active.
6. **There is a lack of coordination for off-highway vehicle management on the Helena National Forest.** Proposed changes in existing travel management and use are not always identified or discussed by adjacent districts, affected agencies, user groups or interested publics prior to implementation. Too often, travel plan revisions are made without sufficient public involvement and input.
7. **It is extremely difficult to enforce many of the current Forest Travel Plan restrictions,** for a variety of reasons. Roads which are physically closed or restricted by means of a gate are usually accessible from alternate entry locations. The Forest has restricted motorized travel on several roads to ensure wildlife security. However, motorized use of lands behind the gates may be legal because the restrictions apply only to roads and not the area itself. If travel restrictions and closures are to be effective, they must be enforceable.

Travel restrictions are often implemented on a site specific basis without evaluating the associated effects upon all travel management. Most OHV opportunities are located over several management and travel restriction areas. Numerous Forest land managers and motorized user groups have expressed their interest in revising the Forest Travel Plan.

The Helena Forest Plan directed that roads and trails open for motorized use meet an established criteria for "maximum open road density" to provide wildlife security. An inventory of existing off-highway vehicle areas has not yet been completed. Additional travel plan restrictions will be necessary if open road densities are exceeded.

8. Because travel management is currently accomplished on a site specific basis, **it is difficult to obtain adequate public involvement in the travel planning process.** Public input is requested for individual management activities occurring on the Forest. Because activities are numerous and often unrelated, the need for public input is continuous. Motorized user groups are often asked for travel planning input on several simultaneous projects. They don't always have sufficient time or resources to provide input within established time frames. If existing motorized use and opportunities are not identified they may be unintentionally abolished.

9. **The elimination of 36 CFR 261.12e (40" width motorized trail vehicle restriction) requires a thorough trail inventory.** Many trails which were closed to motorized vehicles over 40" are now open for their use until they can be analyzed and specific restrictions implemented. Resource and safety concerns must be evaluated in determining appropriate width restrictions for specific motorized trails.
10. **Forest Service Manual 2352.1 states that "four-wheel drive ways" should be managed as a segment of the Forest Development Road System.** Four-wheel drive ways are defined as a forest development road which is commonly used by four-wheel drive, high-clearance vehicles with a width greater than 40 inches. State law and Regional Policy indicate that "mixed traffic" **will not** be permitted on Forest Development Roads. This means that Forest Roads must be closed to "nonstreet legal" vehicles" such as unlicensed ATVs and trail bikes.

Currently, many low standard roads on the Forest are being utilized by a variety of OHV users. In most cases, roads that are driven by street legal 4x4 vehicles are also used by nonstreet legal ATVs and trail bikes. If the roads are designated as "four-wheel drive ways" and managed for 4x4 vehicle use, such as pickup trucks, it appears these same roads can not provide opportunities for other nonstreet legal vehicles. This will certainly affect the existing on-the-ground situation and limit many OHV opportunities.

11. **Many of the existing routes which are being utilized by the OHV users are located on both Forest and private lands.** Although many private lands have not been closed to public use, no legal right-of-way exists through that property. Private landowners have the authority to restrict access to their property at any time and curtail existing OHV use.
12. **Roads currently utilized as snowmobile trails have not yet been legally closed to other motorized traffic on the Helena National Forest.** A majority of the snowmobile trail system on the Helena Forest is located on Forest Development Roads. Policy direction from the Regional Office states the Forest Roads can be utilized as Designated Snowmobile Trails only after the roads have been closed to street legal vehicles.
13. **Future log hauling activities may further impact groomed snowmobile trails.** Recently, several of the established snowmobile trails have been plowed for winter logging. Once the road is plowed, it can no longer be legally used by snowmobiles, as per state law. Often times these plowed roads are a vital segment of the snowmobile trail system and provide access to other groomed snowmobile routes.
14. **Increased demands for recreational opportunities on Forest lands have created several user conflicts.** These conflicts exist between various motorized users themselves and between the nonmotorized user and motorized recreationists. There are local publics who oppose all off-highway vehicle use on Forest lands. "Nonmotorized recreationists do not enjoy the encounters with motorcycles, dune buggies, and four-wheel drive vehicles, numerous studies have shown. ORVs, in other words, impair other people's enjoyment or understanding of the outdoors on public land" (Sheridan 1979).

A conflict which has surfaced recently involves two motorized user groups. Segments of the established snowmobile system located on Forest Roads are also popular winter routes with several local 4x4 enthusiasts. Wheeled vehicle use on groomed snowmobile trails does cause some rutting and a safety concern has been identified by the Snowdrifters Snowmobile Club. Because the roads are legally open to street legal vehicles, 4x4 vehicle users feel they should have access along with the snowmobilers.

15. **Resource damage is occurring on Forest lands as a result of off-highway vehicle use.** The effects of motorized use include impacts upon: vegetation, soils, water quality, and possibly wildlife. The severity of these impacts have not been fully determined.
16. **Motorized user groups in the Helena area sense little progress in their efforts to develop additional opportunities due to personnel changes on the Forest.** Two of the local motorized user groups believe there is a lack of continuity regarding OHV management within the Helena Forest. Working relationships which have been developed and cultivated between motorized user groups and ranger districts are often disrupted when employees transfer.
17. **It is extremely difficult for Forest personnel to be responsive to motorized user groups due to a multitude of other priorities.** Job responsibilities often prevent a timely response to requests from off-highway vehicle organizations. In addition, there continue to be a greater number of forest user groups and interests to represent.
18. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) is identified in FSM 2310.3 as a system developed for recreation planning and management which should be utilized by the National Forests. **The necessary ROS mapping has not been completed for all Helena Forest lands.**
19. The Forest Plan stated that loop roads were not recommended and should be avoided in most cases. **In contrast, motorized loop opportunities are the very experience the OHV user is seeking.**

V. DISCUSSION

This paper has attempted thus far to present a history of off-highway vehicle use on the Helena National Forest. An important component of this review was the identification of regulations and policy which affect OHV use on the Helena Forest. A second and equally important section of this paper was the analysis of existing off-highway vehicle use and management on Helena Forest lands.

Off-highway vehicle use in this area has been and will continue to remain popular. The most recent increase in OHV use can be directly attributed to the growth of the ATV industry. The Forest has not been responsive in providing trail opportunities for this "new" user group. In addition, although the number of trail bike and 4-wheel drive recreationists has remained stable, opportunities for their use have decreased through implementation of road, trail and area restrictions. "The land manager must assure an alternative for ORV use if he closes a previously used one. Closing areas which have been historically used by ORVs without providing other areas for similar use will lead to serious enforcement problems, public resentment, and lack of respect for the agency" (Schade 1980).

Local motorized user groups have recently expressed their desire to assist with future off-highway vehicle planning. In addition, motorized groups have volunteered their expertise, time and labor to assist with trail development and maintenance activities. "Most of the responsibility for trail development is borne by the users, who are also in a position to assist with maintenance. In turn, land managers have a right to expect help from users but they must also be prepared to make a commitment themselves to help in solving problems" (Sanderson 1981).

To facilitate continued cooperation between OHV users and the Helena National Forest, this paper will identify and discuss recommended management direction. Many of these recommendations are based upon input from motorized user groups and forest personnel. Management recommendations are provided to: 1) enhance OHV opportunities on the Forest, 2) foster partnerships with local motorized user groups, 3) further protect forest resources, and 4) integrate management of all recreation opportunities, both motorized and nonmotorized, on the Helena National Forest.

While these recommendations are presented to reduce or eliminate identified OHV management concerns, it's not possible to implement all of them at this time. Based upon time and budget constraints, both immediate and long range recommendations are suggested.

Recommendations (Immediate Implementation)

1. **Designate an Off-Highway Vehicle Coordinator for the Forest and at all three ranger districts.** Ideally, these individuals would have either recreation or travel management responsibilities and knowledge of existing motorized use occurring on the Forest.

All proposed resource management activities on the Forest which may affect off-highway vehicle use should be reviewed by the OHV Coordinators. It would be their responsibility to contact all key OHV representatives when Forest project proposals are initiated. Input from interested and affected publics would be obtained and incorporated into the planning process. The OHV Coordinators would also serve as the primary Forest contact with other land management agencies. All OHV management activities which may affect adjoining districts, National Forests or other government agency lands should be discussed with appropriate agency representatives and evaluated prior to implementation.

The State of Montana, Department of Fish Wildlife & Parks, has managed a Snowmobile Program since 1973. Effective January 1, 1991, the state initiated a similar program for other off-highway vehicles. The state OHV Program will affect off-highway vehicle use on National Forest lands. Helena Forest OHV Coordinators should assist with the development and implementation of the State OHV Program at the local level.

This recommendation is responsive to OHV Management Concerns #5,6,8,16 and 17.

2. **The Helena National Forest should initiate an inventory of existing and potential OHV opportunities.** This inventory has begun through the development of this project. All system trails on the Forest and their associated travel restrictions have been identified in this paper (Appendix E). Management areas with motorized travel restrictions are also listed in this document (Appendix D).

Additional inventories of current OHV opportunities are necessary. Each of the system trails on the Helena Forest managed for motorized use must be evaluated. All trails with motorized use should comply to established Region One motorized trail standards. Because the regulation which restricted motorized trail use for vehicles greater than 40 inches in width was eliminated, new width restrictions may be necessary. Trails accessible for motorized use must be managed based upon the type of vehicle, type of traffic, and or vehicle characteristics, rather than strictly on width restrictions.

"Before a logical trail system plan can be developed, the planner must know what is happening on the land base and predict with reasonable accuracy what is going to happen in the future" (Wernex 1984). Trails and dispersed areas with existing motorized use must be inventoried and analyzed to ensure compliance with Executive Order 11644 (Appendix A). The regulation requires that areas and trails shall be located to: minimize damage to forest resources, minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitat, and minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses.

Forest Development Roads should also be inventoried to determine OHV suitability. Although these roads are only available for "street legal" OHVs, they do provide opportunities for most 4-wheel drive vehicles. The Helena Ranger District has identified all system roads and associated motorized restrictions if applicable. A similar inventory should be completed for the remaining two districts. The Frontier 4-Wheelers of Helena are seeking a variety of challenging and designated roads for their use. Many existing low standard roads may provide these opportunities.

Potential OHV opportunities can best be identified through the process of Recreation Opportunity Spectrum (ROS) mapping. "The ROS framework is useful in providing insights (if not answers) to many issues associated with ORV use and its impacts" (Clark 1980). ROS mapping which identifies recreational experiences, settings, and activities should be completed for the Helena Forest. The Forest currently utilizes a Recreation Opportunity Inventory which could provide the basis for ROS mapping. Mapping current ROS activities would indicate inconsistencies between existing use and Forest Plan direction. It would also be helpful in delineating areas where additional motorized opportunities may be developed.

This recommendation is responsive to OHV Management Concerns #2,3,5,14 and 18.

3. **Helena Forest personnel should continue to strengthen relationships with local off-highway vehicle organizations.** "The thou shalt approach to policy implementation through regulation cannot succeed without the cooperative involvement of user groups" (Dennis 1990). When requested, Forest and district OHV Coordinators should attend organization meetings and rides. Input from the orga-

nized off-highway vehicle groups should be documented and considered during any land planning process which may affect their recreational activities.

In response to the 1990 Recreation Marketing Plan for the Helena National Forest, partnerships between interested motorized user groups and the Helena National Forest should be developed and maintained. These partnerships would foster increased compliance with travel restrictions, increased involvement in the planning process and a more effective OHV management program. Potential partnership projects include but are not limited to:

- a. Identification of off-highway vehicle opportunities.
- b. Cost-share opportunities for trail construction and maintenance.
- c. Adopt-a-trail maintenance agreements.
- d. Cooperative Tread Lightly Education Programs.

This recommendation is responsive to OHV Management Concerns #4,5,6,7,8,16 and 17.

4. **The Helena National Forest should continue to resolve off-highway vehicle use conflicts through the public involvement process.** Input and assistance from recreational users is absolutely essential for the successful resolution of conflicts regarding their activities. "With cooperation, coordination, and planning we can reduce conflicts and provide an environment to satisfy that common need" (Feuchter 1980).

Negotiation of conflict between various and often opposing interest groups is a difficult task. All affected user groups must be represented and involved in conflict resolution. "Bringing the groups together will first of all reduce the level of rhetorical conflict between the groups, and second, it will get each side to realize that they cannot have everything and that they have to start compromising" (West 1980). Their interests and concerns must be identified regarding specific conflicts and existing management policy. Alternatives for conflict resolution should be developed based upon those concerns.

Both the Helena and Lincoln Ranger Districts have attempted to resolve user conflicts through joint negotiation. Last year, the Helena District initiated a conflict resolution process regarding winter travel access. If the Travel Plan revision cannot be initiated quickly, it is recommended that district personnel resume the negotiating process with identified user groups and affected agencies to resolve existing conflicts.

Most off-highway vehicle users do not belong to any local motorized groups. The Helena Forest should attempt to obtain their input regarding OHV use and management also. It is recommended that OHV Coordinators pursue input and involvement of all motorized users, not just the organized groups.

This recommendation is responsive to OHV Management Concerns #6,8,14,16 and 17.

5. **The Helena National Forest should develop and manage an effective off-highway vehicle program.** This would be accomplished through the cooperation of local motorized user groups and adjacent land management agencies. An OHV Program should be developed and implemented which would identify: motorized trail opportunities, specific maintenance needs, maintenance responsibilities, appropriate signing needs, travel restrictions if applicable, and partnership agreements. Maps and or brochures which identify a variety of off-highway trail opportunities should be distributed. These handouts could provide valuable information such as: location of scenic viewing areas, safe operating techniques, proper trail ethics, motorized restrictions, etc.

The Forest should encourage low impact off-highway vehicle use. Educational programs, developed jointly by Forest personnel and motorized users, could be presented to school children and local organizations within the Helena Forest area-of-influence. "Land managers who are prepared to use information and education programs as a major management tool can alleviate problems that sometimes seem insurmountable" (Sanderson 1980).

This recommendation is responsive to OHV Management Concerns #4,5,6,14 and 16.

Recommendations (Long Range Implementation)

6. **The Helena National Forest should develop and designate additional OHV opportunities.** "Trail design should seek to accomplish three objectives. These objectives are: satisfaction of user needs, protection of the resource, and cost effectiveness" (Wernex 1980). In particular, loop trails should be identified which provide access to motorized opportunities between 40 and 80 miles in length. These opportunities should be developed based upon resource impacts, compliance with existing regulations, and ROS mapping.

Trail facilities should be developed for a variety of off-highway vehicles including: 4-wheel drive vehicles, trail bikes, ATVs, dune buggies and snowmobiles. "Nothing government agencies can do will go further toward managing trail bike use than developing adequate mileage of high-quality trails" (Wernex 1980). A large snowmobile trail system has been identified on the Forest but new trail segments may be needed due to winter use conflicts. Some snow-covered system roads should also be identified and managed for 4-wheel drive use. Additional opportunities developed for 4-wheel drive vehicles may also suit the needs of local dune buggy enthusiasts. ATV trails should be managed to provide access for trail bikes. It must be noted however, ATV use may be restricted on many motorized bike trails due to resource and safety considerations.

It is imperative that future OHV opportunities are developed through public involvement. The responsibility of identifying and developing additional OHV trails is shared by interested publics and the Helena Forest. The type, number, and location of motorized trails should be based upon user preference when possible.

The Helena Forest should continue to manage the majority of OHV opportunities under the concept of "open unless designated closed". Specific travel restrictions should be implemented only when and where necessary to protect forest resources or to avoid user conflicts. In some locations, seasonal area restrictions with designated routes may be preferable to road restrictions. Development of OHV trails would help curtail the negative resource impacts of motorized use in open areas. Additional motorized trail opportunities should encourage use on developed trail facilities rather than dispersed lands.

Many existing system trails on the Forest could be reconstructed or relocated to meet established motorized trail standards. In addition, there are many nonsystem trails (game trails, abandoned travel routes, etc.) on Forest lands which may be desirable for motorized use. Once identified, these trails should be developed to established standards and incorporated into the Helena Forest "trail system". Trails should be constructed and managed to provide the recreational experiences sought by the motorized user.

Although roads do not generally provide the recreation experience sought by many OHV users, they may provide necessary access to other motorized trail segments. In addition, low standard roads will generally provide many of the 4-wheel drive opportunities on designated "four-wheel drive ways". Due to width considerations, some of these old roads may provide excellent opportunities for designated ATV travel if they are transferred to the trail system.

Regional direction (OHV/Snowmobile Use on FDR's) dated October 31, 1990 states that roads managed to provide 4-wheel drive opportunities should be managed as a "four-wheel drive way" and part of the Forest Development Road System. As such, other "nonstreet legal" OHVs would not be authorized to operate on those roads. It was emphasized that we must not invite a mix of street legal vehicles with OHVs on Forest Development Roads.

It is recommended that the Helena Forest designate a system of "four-wheel drive ways" providing opportunities for licensed 4x4 vehicles. These roads should be identified on Forest Travel Plan Maps to provide accurate visitor information and ensure user safety. Only street legal off-highway vehicles would be authorized to use these Forest Development Roads.

It is also recommended that low standard roads no longer being maintained for passenger vehicles or managed as "four-wheel drive ways" be removed from the Forest Development Road Inventory. Many of these roads could then be designated system trails for motorized and nonmotorized activities. Width restrictions should be implemented to regulate the type and use of motorized vehicles desired. In appropriate settings, some trails may accommodate all types of off-highway vehicles, including 4-wheel drive vehicles and dune buggies. On many low standard roads on the forest, all types of off-highway vehicles are currently operating together safely. An example on the Helena Ranger District is the existing Forest Development Road into Tizer Basin. The road is quite rocky and accessible only by off-highway vehicles. If designated a "four-wheel drive way", other OHV travel would be prohibited because it remains part of the Developed Road Inventory.

This recommendation is responsive to OHV Management Concerns #3,4,5,8,10,16 and 19.

7. **The Helena National Forest should seek to obtain legal right-of-way access across private lands where necessary to protect and develop off-highway vehicle opportunities.** A number of existing system trails pass through private property located within the forest boundaries. In addition, many of the roads and travel routes (nonsystem trails) currently being utilized by OHV users, are also located on private lands.

If roads and trails can not be relocated to avoid private property, right-of-way access should be pursued. The Helena Forest should not develop or encourage trail use on private lands without prior written agreement of the land owner. Unless legal access is obtained, future use of motorized trail opportunities could be restricted by private landowners at any time. The acquisition of right-of-way access should be a joint responsibility shared by the Helena Forest and the local motorized user groups.

This recommendation is responsive to OHV Management Concerns #4 and 11.

8. **Based upon numerous OHV management concerns, it is recommended that a Travel Plan revision be initiated for the entire Helena National Forest.** Currently, the Travel Plan is revised as needed on a site specific basis. A complete revision is necessary because: 1) sufficient OHV opportunities have not been developed, 2) enforcement of existing travel restrictions is extremely difficult, and 3) site specific travel revisions do not provide an effective method for travel planning at the Forest level.

Travel management is the singular most important management action regarding public use on the Helena Forest. Without question, a revision of the Helena Forest Travel Plan would be a major undertaking. However, it would provide an opportunity to correct existing user conflicts and a variety of management concerns. A revised and effective Travel Plan could provide management direction for all future resource decisions.

Revision of the Travel Plan should be designated a management priority on the Helena Forest. This action would require input from many Forest personnel but responsibility for revision of the plan should be assigned to specific individuals. Successful implementation of the Travel Plan will depend largely on the amount of prior public involvement in the planning process.

It is recommended that Travel Plan revisions be developed and implemented for all Helena Forest lands through one planning document. Effective travel planning can only occur by evaluating existing use, opportunities, and impacts upon the entire Forest and adjacent lands. Decisions regarding travel at one district may affect motorized opportunities on adjacent districts. In addition, public input necessary for the travel planning process can best be obtained on a forest-wide basis as opposed to smaller land management areas.

This recommendation is responsive to all OHV Management Concerns.

9. **The Helena National Forest must implement additional motorized restrictions where necessary.** A majority of the groomed snowmobile trail system on the Helena Forest is located on Forest Development Roads. Due to safety concerns and state regulation, Regional Forest Service Direction mandates that Forest Development Roads only be used as seasonal snowmobile trails if the road has been closed to street legal vehicles. To enhance snowmobile opportunities and ensure safety, it is recommended that the Helena Forest initiate the legal restriction of wheeled vehicles on Forest Roads designated as snowmobile trails. The Forest Supervisor should issue an Order under 36 CFR 261.54a closing the roads to all motorized vehicles with the exception of snowmobiles under 36 CFR 261.50e for the snowmobile season, December 1st to March 31st. In addition, roads which remain open to wheeled vehicle use during the winter should be closed to snowmobiles.

Motorized access should also be restricted when adverse impacts have been documented to forest resources such as: vegetation, soils, wildlife, and water quality (36 CFR 295.2). Restrictions should be implemented only when impacts can't be mitigated through other management actions.

Motorized restrictions will be necessary to meet the Open Road Density objectives identified within the Forest Plan. It is recommended that the restrictions for Open Road Density only be implemented during the big game hunting season as per direction contained within the Forest Plan (Forest-Wide Standards for Big Game). Travel routes which must be restricted to meet "open road density" objectives should be determined through public involvement.

In some locations, it may be necessary to implement area restrictions to replace existing but ineffective road closures. Some road closures enacted to promote wildlife security are difficult to maintain and do not meet the intent of the road restrictions. Although motorized road access is restricted, the area behind the road barriers is often open and accessible to vehicles from other entry locations. It may be desirable to implement an area closure but provide designated travel routes into the area. An example on the Helena Ranger District is the Hahn Creek Road Restriction.

It is also recommended that width restrictions be implemented for all system trails on the Helena Forest where motorized use is allowed. Due to trail characteristics such as grade, tread, width, and soils, opportunities for motorized access are limited for some types of off-highway vehicles. The width restrictions should be similar on all three ranger districts and adjacent National Forest lands if possible. Motorized trail access could be restricted based upon the following designations: 1) trail bikes only, 2) motorized vehicles up to 50 inches in width (trail bikes and ATVs) and 3) motorized trail vehicles with no width restrictions (trail bikes, ATVs, dune buggies and 4-wheel drive vehicles).

This recommendation is responsive to OHV Management Concerns #2,3,7,9,12,14 and 15.

Process For OHV Trail Development

There is a recognized need on the Helena Forest for development of off-highway vehicle trails. Motorized user groups have requested that additional trails be designated for their use. Travel management direction for off-highway vehicles must be in accordance with Executive Orders 11644 and 11989, the National Environmental Policy Act, 36 CFR 219.21g, 36 CFR 251 and 36 CFR 295. To comply with these regulations, additional policy direction, and forest planning documents, a process for off-highway vehicle trail development is identified.

Additional OHV trail opportunities on the Helena Forest can only be developed with the cooperation and input of local motorized recreationists and organizations. Their involvement through the entire planning process is absolutely necessary for an effective OHV program. The procedures identified are guidelines to be followed when designating or developing new off-highway vehicle trails on the Helena National Forest.

Identification of existing or potential opportunities is the first step in OHV trail development. This may include a single travel route or an entire network of loop trails. Responsibility for identifying these opportunities is shared by the Helena Forest and local forest users. Potential OHV trails include: 1) system trails not currently designed or maintained for motorized use, 2) nonsystem trails or travel routes currently being utilized by motorized users, and 3) Forest Development Roads which are no longer being needed for passenger vehicles.

Once an OHV opportunity has been identified, the proposed travel route must be evaluated for compliance with Forest Plan direction. The proposed trail should meet land management goals and objectives specified in the Forest Plan. Because motorized trails are recognized as designated travel routes which may affect wildlife, they are calculated in the "open road" density standards as identified in the plan. If the proposed trail does not meet Forest Plan guidelines, it may be necessary to close other motorized travel routes in the same area or relocate the proposed trail.

The proposed OHV trail should also be evaluated for compliance with the Forest Travel Plan. Many of the existing motorized restrictions identified on the Travel Plan are implementations of the Forest Plan. Restrictions not tied to Forest Plan direction may be revised, without an amendment to the plan, through the National Environmental Policy Act process.

All new OHV opportunities should be analyzed in relation to a ROS map of the area. The Recreation Opportunity Spectrum should be utilized as a tool for all recreation planning and management. A review of the ROS map will provide valuable information concerning the: setting, activities and experiences associated with the proposed trail location. It will also identify potential conflicts which may occur as a result of the proposed OHV trail. Finally, a review of the ROS map would be useful in defining the appropriate type and amount of use for the new trail.

Following implementation of the first three steps, any proposed trail route should be inventoried. The inventory should include a collection of all information concerning the proposed trail location which may affect planning and management. Specific data which should be gathered includes: trail grade, soils, drainage, and sensitive areas to be avoided. The Helena Forest Land Status Record should be reviewed to determine land ownership of the proposed trail location and identify possible land encumbrances. Trail inventories should also identify and locate features which may enhance the trail experience.

Upon completion of a thorough inventory, planning for the proposed trail should be initiated. Objectives of off-highway vehicle planning are: 1) provide high quality trail opportunities, 2) provide resource protection, and 3) minimize conflicts and law enforcement problems. Various planning guidelines are available for use but should include the Northern Region Planning and Travel Management Notebook.

Also available for use is the document "Planning For OHV Recreation On Public Lands" published by the Park/Gallatin Chapter of the Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association (Appendix G). Criteria which should be addressed in the off-highway vehicle trail planning process includes: type of OHV use, season of use, trail design and location, trail heads and parking facilities, resource protection and OHV program management. In addition, all resource management activities should be integrated into the planning process.

The proposed trail plan (design, location and management) must be analyzed for compliance with existing law. Off-highway vehicle use should be planned and managed to protect land and other resources and to promote public safety. Trails should be located to minimize damage to soils, watershed, vegetation, or other natural, cultural, and historic resources. In addition, trails should be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitat. Proposed trail development and management actions should be submitted for evaluation and effects analysis to the following Forest personnel: fisheries and wildlife biologist, hydrologist, soil scientist, archeologist, OHV coordinators, range conservationist, law enforcement officer, timber management assistant, and resource assistant. Documentation should be provided concerning the potential effects of trail construction and management for motorized use. In particular, a Biological Evaluation must be completed to determine if any proposed, endangered, threatened, and/or sensitive species or their habitat are located within the proposed trail route or may be affected by the off-highway vehicle use.

Specific decisions for OHV use are identified, located, analyzed and carried out during the Forest Plan implementation process. A requirement for Forest Plan implementation and the next step for OHV trail designation is the scoping process. A base level of scoping has occurred thus far in the planning process. However, now that a specific trail plan has been identified, it must be released for public review and input. Designated OHV Coordinators must contact all motorized user groups, adjacent districts and land management agencies of the proposed action. Although some level of opposition may occur, it's absolutely necessary that the opportunity is provided for sufficient public involvement and input.

The scoping process should identify any possible conflicts or issues associated with the trail proposal. Changes to the proposed trail action (alternatives) and or mitigation measures may be necessary based upon public input. NEPA documentation should occur throughout the trail development process. Decision documents are required when changes are made to the existing management direction and/or the on-the-ground situation (FSM 2355.03). The type and degree of documentation will depend upon public response and the significance of the effects resulting from the proposed off-highway vehicle trail. Direction for documentation can be obtained in FSH 1909.15, Environmental Policy and Procedures Handbook. Sixty days advance notice will be given to allow for public review of proposed or revised designations prior to implementation (36 CFR 295.3).

Once an off-highway vehicle trail has been developed, additional management follow-up is required. "The effects of use by specific type of vehicles off roads on National Forest System lands will be monitored" (36 CFR 295.5). Monitoring direction is provided in FSM 1922.7, FSH 1909.12, and "Region 1 Guidelines and 36 CFR 295.5 for monitoring the use of motor vehicles off roads". The success of an Off-Highway Vehicle Program on the Helena National Forest may be determined by our monitoring efforts and our willingness to revise plans to meet changing conditions.

LITERATURE CITED

- Clark, Roger N. **Research Roles And Priorities For Effective Management Of Off-Road Recreation Vehicles.** In, *Off-Road Vehicle Use: A Management Challenge*. pp. 245-254
1980, University of Michigan
- Dennis, Steven. **Implementing Forest Recreation Policy: The Case Of ORVs**
Parks and Recreation Magazine, July 1990
- Federal Register. **Title 36 Code Of Federal Regulations - Parks, Forests and Public Property.**
Office of the Federal Register, National Archives and Records Administration. 1989, Washington, D.C.
- Feuchter, Roy. **Off-Road Vehicle Use: The U.S. Forest Service Perspective.**
In, *Off-Road Vehicle Use: A Management Challenge*. pp. 148-155 1980, University of Michigan
- Motorcycle Industry Council, Inc. **Motorcycle Statistical Annual 1989 and 1990.**
Motorcycle Industry Council, Arlington, VA
- Rasor, Robert. **The Roles And Expectations Of The American Motorcyclist Assoc.**
In, *Planning For Trailbike Recreation*. Document Number GPO-857-177.
USDI Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. 1980, Washington, D.C.
- Sanderson, David W. **Improving The Management Of Two-Wheeled Vehicles: Education.**
In, *Off-Road Vehicle Use: A Management Challenge*. pp. 270-273 1980, University of Michigan
- Sanderson, David. **Some Approaches To Trailbike Recreation.**
In, *Planning For Trailbike Recreation, Part II*. Document Number GPO-830-352
USDI Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. 1981, Washington, D.C.
- Schade, Jr. George A. **Four-Wheel Vehicles User's Perspective.**
In, *Off-Road Vehicle Use: A Management Challenge*. pp. 139-142 1980, University of Michigan
- Sheridan, David. **Off-Road Vehicles On Public Lands.**
Council on Environmental Quality. 1979, Washington, D.C.
- State Of Montana. **Montana Statewide Comprehensive Outdoor Recreation Plan.** 1978, Helena, MT
- State Of Montana. **Montana Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan, Executive Summary Volume I.**
1973, Helena, MT
- State Of Montana. **Statewide Outdoor Recreation Plan.** 1967, Helena, MT
- State Of Montana. **Statutes - Department Of Fish, Wildlife and Parks, 1989 Centennial Edition.**
Montana Dept. Of FW&P. Helena, MT
- Task Force On Outdoor Recreation Resources And Opportunities. **Outdoor Recreation In a Nation of Communities - Action Plan For Americans Outdoors.** 1988, Washington, D.C.
- USDA Forest Service. **Forest Service Handbook 2309.18 - Trails Management.**
USDA Forest Service. Washington, D.C.

USDA Forest Service. **Forest Service Manual 2300 - Recreation, Wilderness, and Related Resource Management.** USDA Forest Service. Washington, D.C.

USDA Forest Service. **Forest Service Manual 7700 - Transportation System.**
USDA Forest Service. Washington, D.C.

USDA Forest Service. **Northern Region Access and Travel Management Notebook.**
USDA Forest Service. 1989, Missoula, MT

USDA Forest Service. **Environmental Impact Statement - Helena Forest Plan.**
USDA Forest Service. 1986, Helena, MT

USDA Forest Service. **Helena National Forest Plan.**
USDA Forest Service. 1986, Helena, MT

Wernex, Joe. **A Guide To Off-Road Motorcycle Design And Construction.**
American Motorcyclist Association. 1984, Westerville, OH

Wernex, Joe. **The Development Of Trailbike Trail Systems In A Forest Environment.**
In, Planning For Trailbike Recreation. Document Number GPO-857-177.
USDI Heritage Conservation and Recreation Service. 1980, Washington, D.C.

West, Patrick. **Summary and Conclusion: Snowmobiles.**
In, Off-Road Vehicle Use: A Management Challenge. pp. 282-285 1980, University of Michigan

APPENDIX

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11644

Use of Off-Road Vehicles on the Public Lands

An estimated 5 million off-road recreational vehicles—motorcycles, minibikes, trail bikes, snowmobiles, dune-buggies, all-terrain vehicles, and others—are in use in the United States today, and their popularity continues to increase rapidly. The widespread use of such vehicles on the public lands—often for legitimate purposes but also in frequent conflict with wise land and resource management practices, environmental values, and other types of recreational activity—has demonstrated the need for a unified Federal policy toward the use of such vehicles on the public lands.

NOW, THEREFORE, by virtue of the authority vested in me as President of the United States by the Constitution of the United States and in furtherance of the purpose and policy of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969 (42 U.S.C. 4321), it is hereby ordered as follows:

SECTION 1. *Purpose.* It is the purpose of this order to establish policies and provide for procedures that will ensure that the use of off-road vehicles on public lands will be controlled and directed so as to protect the resources of those lands, to promote the safety of all users of those lands, and to minimize conflicts among the various uses of those lands.

SEC 2. *Definitions.* As used in this order, the term:

(1) "public lands" means (A) all lands under the custody and control of the Secretary of the Interior and the Secretary of Agriculture, except Indian lands, (B) lands under the custody and control of the Tennessee Valley Authority that are situated in western Kentucky and Tennessee and are designated as "Land Between the Lakes," and (C) lands under the custody and control of the Secretary of Defense;

(2) "respective agency head" means the Secretary of the Interior, the Secretary of Defense, the Secretary of Agriculture, and the Board of Directors of the Tennessee Valley Authority, with respect to public lands under the custody and control of each;

(3) "off-road vehicle" means any motorized vehicle designed for or capable of cross-country travel on or immediately over land, water, sand, snow, ice, marsh, swampland, or other natural terrain; except that such term excludes (A)

any registered motorboat, (B) any military, fire, emergency, or law enforcement vehicle when used for emergency purposes, and (C) any vehicle whose use is expressly authorized by the respective agency head under a permit, lease, license, or contract; and

(4) "official use" means use by an employee, agent, or designated representative of the Federal Government or one of its contractors in the course of his employment, agency, or representation.

SEC 3. *Zones of Use.* (a) Each respective agency head shall develop and issue regulations and administrative instructions, within six months of the date of this order, to provide for administrative designation of the specific areas and trails on public lands on which the use of off-road vehicles may be permitted, and areas in which the use of off-road vehicles may not be permitted, and set a date by which such designation of all public lands shall be completed. Those regulations shall direct that the designation of such areas and trails will be based upon the protection of the resources of the public lands, promotion of the safety of all users of those lands, and minimization of conflicts among the various uses of those lands. The regulations shall further require that the designation of such areas and trails shall be in accordance with the following—

(1) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize damage to soil, watershed, vegetation, or other resources of the public lands.

(2) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize harassment of wildlife or significant disruption of wildlife habitats.

(3) Areas and trails shall be located to minimize conflicts between off-road vehicle use and other existing or proposed recreational uses of the same or neighboring public lands, and to ensure the compatibility of such uses with existing conditions in populated areas, taking into account noise and other factors.

(4) Areas and trails shall not be located in officially designated Wilderness Areas or Primitive Areas. Areas and trails shall be located in areas of the National Park system, Natural Areas, or National Wildlife Refuges and Game Ranges only if the respective agency head determines that off-road vehicle use in such locations will not adversely affect their natural, aesthetic, or scenic values.

(b) The respective agency head shall ensure adequate opportunity for public participation in the promulgation of such regulations and in the designation of areas and trails under this section.

EXECUTIVE ORDER 11989

Off-Road Vehicles on Public Lands

By virtue of the authority vested in me by the Constitution and statutes of the United States of America, and as President of the United States of America, in order to clarify agency authority to define zones of use by off-road vehicles on public lands, in furtherance of the National Environmental Policy Act of 1969, as amended (42 U.S.C. 4321 *et seq.*), Executive Order No. 11644 of February 8, 1972, is hereby amended as follows:

SECTION 1. Clause (B) of Section 2(3) of Executive Order No. 11644, setting forth an exclusion from the definition of off-road vehicles, is amended to read "(B) any fire, military, emergency or law enforcement vehicle when used for emergency purposes, and any combat or combat support vehicle when used for national defense purposes, and".

SEC. 2. Add the following new Section to Executive Order No. 11644:

"SEC. 9. *Special Protection of the Public Lands.* (a) Notwithstanding the provisions of Section 3 of this Order, the respective agency head shall, whenever he determines that the use of off-road vehicles will cause or is causing considerable adverse effects on the soil, vegetation, wildlife, wildlife habitat or cultural or historic resources of particular areas or trails of the public lands, immediately close such areas or trails to the type of off-road vehicle causing such effects, until such time as he determines that such adverse effects have been eliminated and that measures have been implemented to prevent future recurrence.

"(b) Each respective agency head is authorized to adopt the policy that portions of the public lands within his jurisdiction shall be closed to use by off-road vehicles except those areas or trails which are suitable and specifically designated as open to such use pursuant to Section 3 of this Order."

JIMMY CARTER

THE WHITE HOUSE,
May 24, 1977

APPENDIX C

36 CODE OF FEDERAL REGULATIONS (Revision)

Federal Register/Vol. 55, No. 122/Monday June 25, 1990/Rules and Regulations

Proposed Rule

On September 14, 1988 (53 FR 35526-35527) the Forest Service published in the Federal Register proposed amendments to 36 CFR part-Prohibitions, which identifies prohibited acts and conduct on National Forest System Lands. As proposed, the rule would have removed the general prohibition at 36 CFR 261.12(e) against use of vehicles over 40 inches wide on a forest development trail and instead would have authorized the Forest Supervisor to manage trail use and traffic by issuing specific orders under 36 CFR part 261, subpart B.

The current prohibition against allowing any vehicle wider than 40 inches on a forest trail was originally intended to prohibit four-wheel drive vehicle use on Forest development trails and was not based on trail design standards. As noted in the preamble to the proposed rule, a variety of vehicles suitable for trail use are being manufactured now that exceed the current 40 inch prohibition by 1 to 5 inches. Generally, trails that will accommodate a 40 inch wide vehicle will also accommodate slightly wider models without adverse effect. The current rule, however, prohibits such vehicles and has led to trail user confusion and law enforcement difficulties. For these reasons, the Forest Service proposed that rather than continue a general prohibition based on an arbitrary width of vehicles, each Forest Supervisor be given the authority to order site-specific prohibitions of motor vehicles based on type of vehicle, type of traffic, and or vehicle characteristics. This approach would allow the Forest Supervisor to choose the best method of managing trail use, while minimizing resource damage, providing for public safety, and responding to local management needs.

Controlling Paperwork Burdens on the Public

This rule does not contain any recordkeeping or reporting requirements or other information collection requirements as defined in 5 CFR Part 1320 and therefore imposes no paperwork burden on the public.

Therefore, the proposed rule amending 36 CFR part 261, subparts A and B, which was published at 53 FR 35527 on September 14, 1988 is adopted as set forth below.

Dated: June 15, 1990

Clayton Yeutter
Secretary

PART 261 - PROHIBITIONS

261.55 Forest development trails

When provide by an order issued in accordance with 261.50 of this subpart, the following are prohibited on a forest development trail.

- a) Being on a trail.
- b) Using any type of vehicle prohibited by the order.
- c) Use by any type of traffic or mode of transportation prohibited by the order.
- d) Operating a vehicle in violation of the width, weight, height, length, or other limitations specified by the order.

APPENDIX D

HELENA NATIONAL FOREST TRAVEL PLAN - AREA RESTRICTIONS

February 1991

A. Travel Plan Map Area Restriction #1

Purpose of restriction: wilderness, nonmotorized recreation, elk calving, wildlife security, and winter range.

Area Name	Acreage	4x4	Restriction Dates	
			Trail Bikes	Snowmobiles
Scapegoat	83,000	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Silver King Mtn.	27,100	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Baldy Mtn.	7,100	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Black Mtn.	15,500	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Gates of Mountains	28,600	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Gates Addition	10,500	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
York-Vigilante	5,700	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Jimtown Rd. West	900	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Bilk Mtn.	17,100	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Boulder-Baldy	3,800	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Mt. Baldy East	8,300	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Deep Creek North	3,000	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Elkhorn Mtns.	54,900	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Nevada Mtn.	12,000	Yearlong	Yearlong	Yearlong
Total	277,500			

B. Travel Plan Map Area Restriction #2

Purpose of restriction: winter range and elk calving.

Area Name	Acreage	4x4	Restriction Dates	
			Trail Bikes	Snowmobiles
MacPass Ski Trails	850	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15
Sweats Gulch	21,000	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15
Oregon-Holiday	7,750	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15
Elkhorn Mtn. SE	30,900	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15
Kimber Gulch	11,250	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15	12/1-5/15
Total	71,750			

C. Travel Plan Map Area Restriction #3

Purpose of restriction: wildlife security, winter range, and elk calving.

Area Name	Acreage	4x4	Restriction Dates	
			Trail Bikes	Snowmobiles
Bridle Gulch	4,500	10/15-6/30	10/15-6/30	Yearlong

D. Travel Plan Map Area Restriction #4

Purpose of restriction: wildlife security and nonmotorized recreation

Area Name	Acreage	4x4	Restriction Dates	
			Trail Bikes	Snowmobiles
Boulder/Camas	26,650	10/15-5/15	10/15-5/15	10/15-5/15

E. Travel Plan Map Area Restriction #5

Purpose of restriction: wildlife security.

Area Name	Acreage	4x4	Restriction Dates	
			Trail Bikes	Snowmobiles
Cabin Gulch	6,550	Yearlong	Yearlong	10/15-11/30
North Pole Creek	3,000	Yearlong	Yearlong	10/15-11/30
Elkhorn Mtns.	17,000	Yearlong	Yearlong	10/15-11/30
Anaconda Hill	12,950	Yearlong	Yearlong	10/15-11/30
Blackfoot Meadows	17,400	Yearlong	Yearlong	10/15-11/30
Total	56,900			

F. Travel Plan Map Area Restriction #8

Purpose of restriction: wildlife security and nonmotorized recreation

Area Name	Acreage	4x4	Restriction Dates	
			Trail Bikes	Snowmobiles
Limburger Spring	6,000	Yearlong	10/15-5/15	10/15-11/30

G. Travel Plan Map Area Restriction #10

Purpose of restriction: wildlife security.

Area Name	Acreage	4x4	Restriction Dates	
			Trail Bikes	Snowmobiles
Ogden Mtn.	5,350	10/15-11/30	10/15-11/30	10/15-11/30

APPENDIX E

HELENA NATIONAL FOREST TRAIL INVENTORY & MOTORIZED USE

February 1991

Helena Ranger District

	Trail Miles	% of District Total
1. Total (excluding snowmobile)	144.8	
2. Groomed snowmobile trails	185.0	
3. Wilderness trails	49.8	34%
4. Closed yearlong (includes wilderness)	95.8	66%
5. Snowmobile use only	30.0	21%
6. Seasonal restrictions	10.0	7%
7. No motorized restrictions	6.0	4%
8. Designated OHV trail	3.0	2%

Lincoln Ranger District

1. Total (excluding snowmobile)	228.0	
2. Groomed snowmobile trails	240.0	
3. Wilderness trails	98.8	43%
4. Closed yearlong (includes wilderness)	139.3	61%
5. Snowmobile use only	10.0	4%
6. Seasonal restrictions	13.1	6%
7. No motorized restrictions	53.9	24%
8. Designated OHV trails	11.7	5%

Townsend Ranger District

1. Total (excluding snowmobile)	203.3	
2. Groomed snowmobile trails	60.0	
3. Wilderness trails	0.	
4. Closed yearlong	84.7	42%
5. Snowmobile use only	8.9	4%
6. Seasonal restrictions	42.2	21%
7. No motorized restrictions	42.8	21%
8. Designated OHV trails	24.7	12%

Helena National Forest Trail System

1. Total (excluding snowmobile)	576.1	
2. Groomed snowmobile trails	485.0	
3. Wilderness trails	148.6	26%
4. Closed yearlong (includes wilderness)	319.8	56%
5. Snowmobile use only	48.9	8%
6. Seasonal restrictions	65.3	11%
7. No motorized restrictions	102.7	18%
8. Designated OHV trails	39.4	7%

National Forest System Trails on the Helena Ranger District

Trail #	Trail Name	Trail Miles	Motorized Status
109	Crow Creek Falls	1.2	snowmobiles only
110	Poe Park	2.0	1.0 snowmobiles only 1.0 yearlong closure
111	Iron Mine	2.0	yearlong closure
112	Clear Park	1.7	yearlong closure
113	Elk Park	5.2	2.6 snowmobiles only 2.6 yearlong closure
114	Moose Creek	3.2	yearlong closure
115	Upper Beaver Creek	1.9	yearlong closure
129	Manley Park	1.2	snowmobiles only
130	Little Tizer Creek	2.9	snowmobiles only
131	Leslie Lake	2.3	yearlong closure
247	Hanging Valley	5.0	yearlong closure
252	Big Log Gulch	12.7	yearlong closure
253	Meriwether Canyon	5.9	yearlong closure
255	Hunters Gulch	3.0	yearlong closure
257	Missouri River Canyon	4.9	yearlong closure
259	Refrigerator Canyon	9.0	yearlong closure
260	Willow Creek	12.5	yearlong closure
263	Porcupine Creek	1.8	yearlong closure
270	Trout Creek	3.0	OHV DESIGNATION width restriction
301	Montgomery Park	7.0	yearlong closure
302	McClellan Creek	5.5	yearlong closure
328	Bison Mountain	6.0	snowmobiles only
329	Blackfoot Meadows	6.9	snowmobiles only
343	E. Fork McClellan Cr.	2.5	yearlong closure
344	Jackson Creek	1.2	yearlong closure
346	Crystal Creek	1.5	yearlong closure
347	Willard Creek	1.1	yearlong closure
348	Continental Divide	5.7	NO RESTRICTIONS
349	Jericho Creek	1.3	snowmobiles only
352	Golden Age Cutoff	0.8	snowmobiles only
359	Larabee Gulch	3.3	snowmobiles only
362	Monarch Creek	2.8	snowmobiles only
371	Cave Gulch	0.3	NO RESTRICTIONS
373	Mount Helena	5.5	yearlong closure
374	Casey Peak	1.2	yearlong closure
375	Ten Mile Education Trail	0.8	yearlong closure
380	X-Country Ski Trails	10.0	seasonal restriction

National Forest System Trails on the Townsend Ranger District

Trail #	Trail Name	Trail Miles	Motorized Status
103	Timber Creek	3.0	OHV DESIGNATION
105	Cedar Bar Falkner	3.8	NO RESTRICTIONS
107	Holloway	4.5	NO RESTRICTIONS
108	Swamp Creek	4.5	seasonal restriction
109	Crow Creek	7.8	4.8 yearlong closure 3.0 seasonal restriction
110	Tizer Poe Park	2.3	yearlong closure
112	Longfellow Clear Cr.	11.0	yearlong closure
115	Beaver Creek	10.9	yearlong closure
116	Sheep Park	2.1	yearlong closure
117	Pole Creek	3.4	2.0 snowmobiles only 1.4 yearlong closure
118	Belt Mountain Divide	10.1	8.1 seasonal restriction 2.0 yearlong closure
121	Blacktail	3.0	OHV DESIGNATION
123	Carl Creek	3.6	NO RESTRICTIONS
124	Skidway	3.6	NO RESTRICTIONS
125	Ridge	3.4	snowmobiles only
126	W.F. Cabin	3.5	snowmobiles only
127	S. Crow Lakes	2.0	yearlong closure
128	Hall Creek	1.5	yearlong closure
129	Crow Cr. Jump-off	0.5	yearlong closure
133	Crazy Cr. Longfellow	4.2	yearlong closure
134	Falls Creek	2.4	yearlong closure
135	Long Creek	4.6	yearlong closure
138	S. Beaver Creek	7.0	yearlong closure
139	Camas Creek	4.0	seasonal restriction
140	Camas	9.8	seasonal restriction
140A	Camas Lake	0.8	yearlong closure
141	Pickfoot	2.1	OHV DESIGNATION seasonal restriction
142	Boulder Lakes	9.0	6.0 seasonal restriction 3.0 yearlong closure
144	Confederate	2.5	NO RESTRICTIONS
145	Kentucky	2.7	seasonal restriction
147	Middle Fork Duck Cr.	2.0	seasonal restriction
149	Birch Creek	2.0	yearlong closure
150	Gipsy	7.5	yearlong closure
151	Duck Cr. Micro	5.0	3.0 NO RESTRICTIONS 2.0 yearlong closure

Continuation of Townsend Ranger District Trails

Trail #	Trail Name	Trail Miles	Motorized Status
152	Edith Lake	5.3	3.3 NO RESTRICTIONS 2.0 yearlong closure
155	Grace Lake	1.5	yearlong closure
232	Bilk Mtn.	5.1	yearlong closure
234	Narytime 2.6		OHV DESIGNATION
235	Cayuse	4.1	yearlong closure
236	Needham	8.2	OHV DESIGNATION
237	Hellbate Coony	1.8	NO RESTRICTIONS
238	Coony	7.1	NO RESTRICTIONS
239	Hunters	4.5	OHV DESIGNATION
240	Little Hellgate	6.0	OHV DESIGNATION
241	Bar Gulch	2.0	NO RESTRICTIONS
264	Thompson Hellgate	5.0	NO RESTRICTIONS

National Forest System Trails on the Lincoln Ranger District

Trail #	Trail Name	Trail Miles	Motorized Status
401.1	Sauerkraut	1.5	seasonal restriction
401.2	Sauerkraut	1.0	NO RESTRICTIONS
404.1	Ogden Mtn.	4.0	seasonal restriction
405.1	Washington Gulch	1.5	NO RESTRICTIONS
417	Stone	3.0	NO RESTRICTIONS
418.1	Stonewall Snowbank	3.2	NO RESTRICTIONS
418.2	Stonewall Copper	3.2	NO RESTRICTIONS
420	Silverking	3.0	yearlong closure
422	Landers Fork	4.0	yearlong closure
423	Red Mountain	4.0	yearlong closure
424	Heart Lake	2.0	yearlong closure
425	Twin Lakes	2.5	yearlong closure
427	Sourdough Basin	4.0	yearlong closure
432	Red Bridge	4.2	yearlong closure
433	Crow Creek	2.5	yearlong closure
438.1	Landers Fork	3.2	yearlong closure
438.2	Landers Fork	5.2	yearlong closure
438.3	Landers Fork	6.0	yearlong closure
440.1	CDNST	1.5	yearlong closure
440.2	CDNST	2.5	yearlong closure
440.4	CDNST	2.5	yearlong closure
440.5	CDNST	3.0	yearlong closure
440.6	CDNST	2.0	yearlong closure
440.7	CDNST	3.0	snowmobiles only
440.8	CDNST	4.0	snowmobiles only
440.9	CDNST	3.0	snowmobiles only
440.10	CDNST	8.0	NO RESTRICTIONS

Continuation of Lincoln Ranger District Trails

Trail #	Trail Name	Trail Miles	Motorized Status
440.11	CDNST	2.0	NO RESTRICTIONS
440.12	CDNST	3.5	NO RESTRICTIONS
440.13	CDNST	1.0	NO RESTRICTIONS
440.14	CDNST	2.5	NO RESTRICTIONS
440.15	CDNST	5.5	yearlong closure
441	Sheep Creek	4.5	yearlong closure
465.1	Mitchell Creek	1.0	NO RESTRICTIONS
465.2	Mitchell Creek	3.0	NO RESTRICTIONS
466.1	Nevada Creek	1.0	yearlong closure
466.2	Nevada Creek	1.5	yearlong closure
466.3	Nevada Creek	2.0	yearlong closure
467.1	Gould-Helmville	2.0	OHV DESIGNATION width restriction
467.2	Gould-Helmville	2.0	OHV DESIGNATION width restriction
467.3	Gould-Helmville	6.2	OHV DESIGNATION width restriction
467.4	Gould-Helmville	1.5	OHV DESIGNATION width restriction
468.1	Moose Creek	4.1	seasonal restriction
468.2	Moose Creek	1.5	seasonal restriction
475	Mineral Creek Cutoff	1.5	yearlong closure
476.1	Bugle Mtn.	3.0	yearlong closure
476.2	Bugle Mtn.	3.0	yearlong closure
477.1	Lone Mtn.	2.5	yearlong closure
477.2	Lone Mtn.	3.0	yearlong closure
478	Switch Back Hill	2.0	yearlong closure
479.1	Middle Fork	7.0	yearlong closure
479.2	Upper Landers	1.0	yearlong closure
480	Meadow Creek Cutoff	1.5	yearlong closure
481.1	Mainline	1.2	yearlong closure
481.2	Mainline	8.0	yearlong closure
481.3	Mainline	7.0	yearlong closure
482.1	Arrasta	4.5	yearlong closure
482.2	Meadow Creek	2.5	yearlong closure
482.3	Meadow Creek	1.0	yearlong closure
483.1	Dry Creek	4.0	yearlong closure
483.2	Dry Cr.-Meadow Cr.	3.5	yearlong closure
483.3	Meadow Creek	4.5	yearlong closure
484	Mineral Creek	7.0	yearlong closure
485	Stonewall Copper	5.0	3.0 NO RESTRICTIONS 2.0 seasonal restriction
487.1	Prickly-Nevada	1.0	NO RESTRICTIONS
487.2	Prickly-Nevada	2.0	NO RESTRICTIONS
487.3	Prickly-Nevada	2.5	yearlong closure
488	Porcupine Basin	2.5	yearlong closure
0	X-Country Ski Trails	15.0	NO RESTRICTIONS

APPENDIX F

HELENA NATIONAL FOREST
KEY OFF-HIGHWAY VEHICLE CONTACTS
February 1991

A. Snowmobile Interests

Name	Affiliation	Phone #	Location
Russ Gray	Mountain Sports	362-4849	Lincoln
Bob Orr	Ponderosa Snow Warriors	362-4230	Lincoln
Gil Schmaus	Great Falls Snomobilers	453-6845	Great Falls
Dennis Ogle	Montana Snowmobile Assoc.	475-3797	Helena
John Semple	Helena Snowdrifters	443-7487	Helena
Stan Tordale	Helena Snowdrifters	443-5090	Helena
Vonne Schatz	Helena Snowdrifters	442-0873	Helena

B. ATV / Trail Bike Interests

Name	Affiliation	Phone #	Location
Linda Ellison	Montana Trail Vehicle Riders Association		P.O. Box 6118 Bozeman
Larry Liscum	Great Falls Trail Bike Riders Association		P.O. Box 2884 Great Falls
Dale Yurek	The Great Falls ATV Association	761-1265	Great Falls
Bruce West	N/A	362-4263	Lincoln
Dal Smile	American Motorcyclist Association	444-5622	Helena
Joe Mullikin	Rocky Mountain Trail Bike Riders Association	442-6715	Helena
Dennis Miller	Rocky Mountain Trail Bike Riders Association	443-0983	Helena
Ed Feist	Capital Trail Bike Riders Association	449-6143	Helena
Pat Foley	Rocky Mountain Trail Bike Riders Association	227-6509	Helena

C. 4x4 Interests

Name	Affiliation	Phone #	Location
Steve Slagle	Montana 4x4 Association	933-5664	Clancy
Bud Wheeler	Cascade Cty. 4-Wheelers	453-4263	Great Falls
Red Duncan	Frontier 4-Wheelers	933-8652	Helena
Don Gordon	Frontier 4-Wheelers	458-9577	Helena

APPENDIX G

PLANNING FOR OHV RECREATION ON PUBLIC LANDS BY THE PARK/GALLATIN CHAPTER OF THE MONTANA TRAIL VEHICLE RIDERS ASSOCIATION, MAY 1990

I. Introduction

Why worry about planning in the first place; isn't there plenty of places for motorized recreation as is?

A. Without planning it will become increasingly difficult to:

1. reduce user conflicts on the shrinking land base open to motorized recreation;
2. provide for resource protection;
3. provide for the full spectrum of OHV needs; and
4. combat misconceptions about OHV recreational needs.

B. The main objectives of OHV recreation planning are:

1. provide for user satisfaction, this means all users of a shared resource;
2. provide for resource protection; and
3. reverse the administrative focus from restrictions to provision of opportunities. Motorized recreation is a well established recreational form that has been around for at least 30 years.

C. What is an OHV, or off-highway vehicle?

1. trail motorcycles (does not include street machines)
2. ATVs (All Terrain Vehicles), 3 and 4 wheelers less than 50 "
3. snowmobiles

D. How many OHV's are we talking about in Montana?

According to the Motorcycle Industry Council, there are approximately 30,400 trail motorcycles and ATVs in Montana and over 15,000 snowmobiles (by other sources). The population of cycles and snowmobiles has fluctuated for the past few years while ATVs are growing in popularity. In addition, the six neighboring states have a total OHV population of 246,000, according to MIC. This is significant as many of them turn to Montana for motorized recreational opportunities.

E. What is the attraction?

Before attempting to plan for OHV recreation, land managers need to have an understanding of the sport, or preferably be participants themselves.

OHV recreation has it's own set of attractions, once described as a carnival ride limited only by your imagination and ability. Some of the attractions are:

- * access to scenic views, waterfalls, lakes, historic sites, hunting and fishing;
- * a way to enjoy the outdoors for those who cannot walk or own horses;
- * back country access for those with limited time;
- * the continuing challenge of the ride, mastering the machine through a variety of natural obstacles such as:
 - stream crossings
 - switchbacks
 - sidehill trail sections
 - up and over hills
 - constantly changing terrain and trail conditions
 - logs, rock steps, and jumps

II. OHV PLANNING, LONG RANGE

Prior to the loss of riding opportunities due to wilderness and administrative land closures, there was little need for OHV planning. Motorized recreation was thinly spread over the entire area with few resulting impacts on other users or the resource.

This is now changed, and it is time for the land managers and users to work together to establish long term goals.

A. From the view of OHV riders, the following are five long term goals that need consideration by land managers (not necessarily in order or priority):

1. Maintain an adequate land base.
2. Mitigation of user conflict.
3. Provide a full spectrum of riding opportunities for each type of OHV.
4. Provide for resource protection.
5. Monitoring programs to protect the resources and respond to changing needs.

B. Discussion on the Proposed Goals:

1. An adequate land base is needed to provide trail design options and reduce the need for intensive and expensive management. Providing opportunities for OHV recreation also provides recreation for other users. Trail systems adequate for OHVs are also good enough for horses, hikers, and mountain bikes. In many cases the use of the properly constructed trail by OHVs will make it better as OHVs will roll out the large rocks and compact it consistently for easy walking.

All existing trails in the forest system should be shown on Travel Plans as a way to maintain the land base. Perhaps these could be shown as not being maintained, if in fact, they are not. In general, all public land management agencies should look at riding opportunities on their lands as well as other public lands to avoid duplication of effort and enhance the distribution of opportunities in a regional sense.

Good planning for OHV recreation should also include trail systems that can provide from 40 to 80 miles of trail riding per day. These should not be located so that riders have to return to the same trail system time after time.

2. Mitigation of user conflicts can be achieved in many ways. Signing to alert users of multiple use areas and trails is one way that is under-utilized. Better enforcement of travel plan restrictions, area closures and sound levels and the OHV sticker law is needed. Perhaps the land managers could aid in the communication between user groups for questions as simple as how to pass a horse with a motorcycle.

3. Within each type of OHV, there is a need to provide opportunities for beginners, intermediate, and advanced riders. Safety, resource protection, and rider satisfaction are the concerns driving this need.

Most trails that are in use today are destination oriented, but also offer an interesting, if not challenging ride. Trails that have only a destination but an antiseptic ride, are unacceptable from the users view. However, trails that offer an interesting or challenging ride, but no destination are acceptable. The following is a summary of planning criteria or design objectives that can be used by land managers for OHV recreation:

PLANNING CRITERIA

- a. Trails should remain primitive in appearance.
 - b. Use native materials and rustic construction.
 - c. Provide for beginning to advanced riders, providing a challenge for all types.
 - d. Provide a series of interconnected loop systems.
 - e. Trail design for OHVs does not have to be "elevation conservative" as do trails for hiking or destination oriented trails. Elevation changes can in fact add to the interest of OHV trails. Trails should weave through the terrain rather than pass through in a straight line.
 - f. Locate trails to provide scenic vistas, a variety of terrain, changing landscapes, and natural obstacles. (Diversity is the key)
 - g. Provide information along the routes - signing.
 - h. Switchbacks and water crossings are desirable if built properly.
 - i. Soil types should be considered in trail construction and design alterations made accordingly.
 - j. Provide trailhead facilities which include parking areas, signing that communicates riding opportunities and closures, and restroom facilities in heavily used areas.
 - k. If an area has been logged-over and contains trails, these should be replaced, but not with roads.
 - l. Alternate routes to the same destination should be considered for the different types of OHVs, for example, old logging roads or jeep trails may be perfectly acceptable to ATVs, but less preferable for trail cycles.
 - m. Land managers need to understand the differences in planning for the various types of OHVs.
4. Providing for resource protection can be achieved by means other than complete closure including:
 - a. construction techniques, such as trail armoring
 - b. trail location or relocation
 - c. seasonal or temporary closures
 - d. coordination with other agencies to provide riding opportunities at lower elevations for early and late season riding
 - e. provision of skill development areas, or sites that are more intensively developed with beginner and intermediate trail types, and
 - f. land managers and planners need to recognize that motorized recreation is less intimidating to wildlife than foot traffic.
 5. Monitoring programs have been largely neglected by the resource management agencies. It may seem that this goal is just another expense that returns nothing to the land, but perhaps there are inexpensive alternatives. One suggestion that has been made is the use of video cameras to establish a baseline information file. Another source of information which has been relied upon in the past, is that the various user groups help generate information.

III. WHAT CAN BE DONE TO ENHANCE WHAT WE HAVE TODAY?

- A. Some examples of trail improvement techniques that benefit OHV and other trail users:
 1. switchback construction/reconstruction

2. proper waterbar placement and design
3. trail drainage
4. loop system development
5. replacement/relocation of "lost" trails

B. Other opportunities:

1. Expansion of the Adopt-a-trail program
2. Utilizing the Montana OHV program - the "sticker" bill - when it comes on line
3. Better communications between land managing agencies, especially in light of the up-coming OHV program
4. Support of gas tax rebate funding for the state OHV program.